

THE DEMONIZATION OF GOD **UNMASKED**



Oswald Daman Grant

"All who take the sword will perish by the sword" – Jesus Christ

OSWALD AND DENICE GRANT

THE DEMONIZATION OF GOD UNMASKED

*He who lives by the sword will die by the sword—Jesus
Christ*



GRACE UNLIMITED MINISTRIES
REVEALING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

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INTRODUCTION

Who is God?

The biblical portrayal of God is very simple:

God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). God is light (1 John 1:5).

As simple as these definite terms may appear, there are however some crucial foundational concepts that must be explored and biblically understood before these defining statements about God can be interpreted correctly and grasped in their totality.

For instance, we need to understand what the Bible means when it says that God is love. The Greek word used by Jesus, the apostle Paul and other New Testament writers to describe and define God's love was *agape*. This *agape* or divine love as described by Paul in first Corinthians 13 is entirely selfless, unconditional, self-sacrificing, and freedom-giving. It encompasses all people: friends and even more amazingly, enemies. This is what is commonly referred to as "the principle of the cross."

In the famous passage found in 1 Corinthians 13, we get a glimpse of the love that exists in the heart of God. This love is the law by which God rules the universe, the law of *agape* love. In this passage we are shown that any works the human mind can conceive in order to attain the highest level of spirituality are worthless if *agape* love is not comprehended and lived out:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,

and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil [‘DOES NOT KEEP RECORDS OF WRONG,’ ACCORDING TO THE NEW GREEK-ENGLISH INTERLINEAR NEW TESTAMENT] [THE ORIGINAL GREEK READS: ‘NOT IMPUTES THE EVIL.’ SOME VERSIONS READ: ‘KEEPS NO ACCOUNT OF EVIL’]; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (verses 1-7; emphasis added).

Any of man’s attainments, whether impressively grand on one hand, or ordinary and humble on the other, are useless and of no positive consequence, if they are found to be in conflict with God’s eternal principle of agape love:

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away (8-10).

When the perfection of God’s *agape* love comes to be known, it will be understood that His love never fails. In addition, our old erroneous ways of thinking about God’s character and living thereby will be done away:

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but

then I shall know just as I also am known (11, 12).

As children we had an immature understanding of God's character of love. Our behavior reflected all the childish things we were involved with because we had an incorrect knowledge of God's love. We become a man when we know with certainty that the essence of God is love.

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (verse 13).

Faith and hope are certainly paramount in our lives. Without faith and hope, no Christian can survive in his or her spiritual walk. But in the passage above we are told that of all three, faith, hope, and love, love is the greatest. When faith and hope appear to be extinct, *agape* love yet survives and transcends all faithlessness and hopelessness, and is a beam of light that will never be extinguished. Paul also confirms that love is the *greatest of these* in the following verses:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 12:14, 17, 21; 13:8, 10).

As we study God's *agape* love, we will realize that His love and human love are worlds apart. It is extremely important that we understand all the facets of divine love. One must also realize that *agape* love is the very essence of

God, and not simply one of His many attributes. God possesses one supreme, unimpeachable, impeccable essence, and that is *agape* love:

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).

In light there can be no darkness. Darkness is the lack of light. Light and darkness cannot mix, they exist separately, and when light arrives darkness disappears. The light of the sun never ceases. It is only blocked by particles of opaque matter in the atmosphere. In the same manner, God's light has never ceased, it has only been blocked by deception. From the outset, therefore, it must be unequivocally stated that the God of the universe cannot have any mixture of light and darkness in any part of His being. In other words, God cannot operate from any two antithetical principles. Observe carefully how the following passages clearly pair the concepts of 'darkness' with 'death,' and 'light' with 'life:'

*The people who sat in **darkness** have seen a great light, [JESUS CHRIST], and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of **death** [THE HUMAN RACE] light [LIFE] has dawned (Matthew 4:16; emphasis added),*

and

*In Him [JESUS CHRIST] was **life**, and the life was the **light** of men (John 1:4; emphasis added).*

Just as light and darkness cannot coexist within God's essence of *agape* love, likewise life and death cannot coexist and proceed from Him, for life is light,

and death is darkness, and God is light in whom there is no darkness at all.

One of Jesus' boldest statements declares that *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22:32)*. What is Jesus really saying by such a categorical statement? Is He saying that God has forsaken those who are dead, or is He saying that God has no part in the principle that causes death?

We know that God has not forsaken the dead, for the Bible is filled with promises that God cares deeply about the dead, and Jesus confirmed that by raising many from death. If this is the case, then we may interpret the statement *God is not the God of the dead but of the living* in a way that portrays God as being the God of both the living and the dead. How so? Because life will be given to all who have died on earth, for God is not a God of death, but of life. That is positively good news indeed. Jesus made such a categorical statement because all who have experienced death will be resurrected by Him:

But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22:31, 32).

For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him (Luke 20:38).

The apostle Paul expounds this further in the following manner:

For since by man [THAT IS, ADAM] came death, by man [JESUS CHRIST] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ...The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 23, 26; emphasis added).

The Bible tells us in fact, that even the wicked will be resurrected after the millennium, further proving that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Needless to say, the Bible also states that they will experience annihilation, for they will, of their own choice, continue to reject God's gift of eternal life. The resurrection of the wicked proves that God gives life and life only, and He does so even though they have chosen another god. They will certainly experience annihilation because even to the last breath they have chosen to live by the principles of the god of this world, who is the god of destruction, thus refusing the principle of life.

As we study further we will see that the true God, He *who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water (Revelation 14:7)*, is the God of life, and He operates only by the life-giving principle of *agape* love. He is not the God of death and of the death-giving principle, which is Satan's principle of *good and evil*, the principle that was represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* in the Garden of Eden. These two principles, *agape* and *good and evil*, are the main subject of this book and will be explained in depth.

It is extremely important that we comprehend the significance of what Jesus stated in the previous two verses from Luke and Matthew. By making such a statement, He refuted and overturned the erroneous belief that God causes death, while at the same time affirming with certainty that God is the giver of life. God does not and cannot use the death principle. It is absolutely contrary to His character and nature. Thus He is not the One responsible for the death we all experience. Therefore, since He is not the God of the dead but the God of the living, death is anathema to Him. This is made quite clear through what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:26: *the last enemy that will be destroyed is death*. The Scriptures make it abundantly apparent that death is an enemy of God because death is the ultimate evil, and as such death cannot proceed from God.

The biblical reasoning behind this present work is drawn from this premise, which is based on the bedrock principle manifested by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary — that He who died on the cross to give us life cannot at the same time be the author of darkness, death and destruction.

Having made the above statements, and with a preliminary understanding

of the biblical meaning of the words 'light' and 'darkness' we are compelled to ask the following questions: have we truly grasped the depth of what is involved in the war between light and darkness? Where did darkness originate? Does God's character, the sum total of His thoughts and actions, reflect any of the works of darkness?

How is it that the majority of the religions of the world can believe in a God whose character is comprised of just such a mixture of light and darkness? Can God's character possibly be comprised of two paradoxical and contrary principles, which somehow become fused into a hybrid principle of love?

Furthermore, if God did indeed act in ways recognized as 'darkness,' that is, in ways that involve not only natural death (if there is such a thing, for to God all death is unnatural) but intentional killing, would we view these acts as not being evil when rendered by God, accounting that God must transcend evil no matter what He does? Should we not hold Him responsible and accountable for these activities in the same way we hold each other accountable? Or, if He did use such dark and punitive methods, would He do it for the ultimate benefit of His creation? Does the type of reasoning behind the epitaph to the German emperor Joseph II, "Kings are forced to do people harm so that good may emerge," explain why we think God does such evil? Would these works of destruction be therefore unavoidable and excusable, for God knows what is best for all concerned? Are we to accept these premises blindly and without question? In fact, does God want us to accept anything blindly at all? Or would He rather we used the intelligent faculties with which He created us to get at the bottom of this paradox?

Many believe that the wicked will be destroyed by God's wrath. It is widely thought that wrathful anger against sin and ungodly sinners is an inherent component of God's love, and this wrath is classified as His righteous indignation, His righteous anger. Is this true, and if so, could this darker aspect of His character, that of wrathful anger, still be considered a part of His love? We all agree that when the Bible says *God is love*, His love must apply to godly people. What about the ungodly? Would God still be *love* if He were to exercise wrath to the point of personally killing or having ungodly people killed? Would God break his own injunction to love one's enemies? Would God

still be love if, in an effort to prevent evil from contaminating and affecting the lives of the godly, He destroyed the wicked? Is the destruction of the ungodly a consequence of God's moral justice on sin and sinners, and if so, would it not nullify what happened on the cross of Calvary?

The Bible leads us into an understanding of who is responsible for originating the death principle in the universe. The works of darkness are the fruit of Lucifer's kingdom, and his kingdom is represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* (Genesis 2:9). In the course of this study it will be seen that it is this being and his emissaries who undertake the execution of all the works of darkness, not God.

When we come to understand that God operates solely from the principle represented by the *tree of life* (Genesis 2:9), we will realize that the Bible indisputably confirms this premise. Then the Bible will take on a new meaning and will come alive. Through much fervent prayer, intense wrestling with the scriptures and equally intense wrestling with God for answers, one will irrefutably conclude that God has not, and will not have any part whatsoever in such works of darkness.

God invites us to ask hard questions. He wants us to investigate these issues so that the mind and intellect which He gave us may be satisfied. Thus, He invites us to reason with Him: *Come now, and let us reason together* (Isaiah 1:18). The promise is given that these hard questions will be answered: *Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you* (Matthew 7:7).

Surely the thoughtful reader of the Bible must have asked some of these questions as well. The question of whether God lives by standards other than the ones He has set out for His creation must have crossed many a mind. Unfortunately the majority of the religious world has blindly accepted falsehood, and concluded that, when personally delivered by or brought about under His directives, God's so-called dark, punitive measures are not truly evil, but simply another facet of His infinite, omniscient love. But such destructive behavior would clearly be categorized as evil if done by human beings. God does not deliver or order dark punitive measures. To believe contrary to this is a false conception.

God desires that the truth about Him be comprehended. In Jeremiah 9:23-24, He says:

Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight."

It would be wise for us to come to a proper understanding of God's counsel to humanity in the statement *But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me*. To understand and know God we need to go back to the book of Genesis in order to clearly grasp what God meant when He told Adam and Eve that the day they ate of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* they would surely die (Genesis 2:17).

Did He mean to say that He would kill them? Or that He would remove His life force from them, thus causing their death? Did He mean that He would punish their disobedience with death? Or was He simply making known to them the consequences of partaking of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, consequences which Satan himself would administer to them? All the implications of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* must be clearly understood by us. Once we know exactly what this tree represents we will know without a shadow of a doubt that God never operates by its death principle, even when in our flawed wisdom we think that circumstances would demand him to use those principles.

The presence of the two trees in the Garden reveals the nature of God's character. One tree represented God's principle of *agape* love and the other Satan's principle of *good and evil*. One may wonder how it is that *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* has any role in reflecting God's character. It does, in this sense: that by allowing Satan's principle to be equally accessible to Adam and Eve, existing side by side with His own principle, God reveals two

aspects of His character that could be easily overlooked: one, that He provides equal access, and two, that He always gives us freedom of choice.

God gave Satan equal access to Adam and Eve so that they could have the freedom to choose whom they would obey and follow. God need not have offered a choice; had He not, Adam and Eve would not have had the opportunity to disobey God and obey Satan, and sin, along with its terrible consequences, would never have entered the world. But it is not in God's character and nature to withhold freedom. Freedom is an inherent component of God's love. The fact that God gave equal accessibility to the adversary in respect to Adam and Eve, additionally reveals God's impartiality, even while faced by evil. This is confirmed by the apostle Peter when he said: *'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality'* (Acts 10:34).

In connection with divine wisdom, the impartiality of God is expounded further by the apostle James:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (James 3:13-17).

The foremost criterion in divine wisdom is that it is first pure, single, without mixture. This means that in divine wisdom there is no synthesis of any two conflicting, or antithetical principles. This is represented by the *tree of life*, which represents the single principle of *agape* love. Those who possess this pure divine wisdom show no partiality in all their activities, even in respect to enemies. The conduct of all human beings reveals whether they are utilizing

God's single, pure principle of *agape* love, or whether they are operating by the dual, demonic principle of *good and evil*.

In the Garden, God did reveal that the wisdom that is from above is first pure. The *tree of life* principle represents God's character and is first pure, which means that it has no mixture or contamination of the death principle. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Therefore, God's principle is not self-seeking, but is willing to yield and is without partiality.

Because God is impartial, He gave Satan equal access to Adam and Eve through his principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Because Satan's principle is a mixture of good and evil, it is not a pure principle.

The tree that represented Satan's principle was not inherently flawed, for God did not create anything imperfect in His original creative work:

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

The two literal trees served only as representations of the two antithetical principles, God's *agape* love, and Satan's principle of *good and evil*. Not only did the presence of the serpent in the tree make it a vessel of death, but the principle that the serpent was proposing to the couple was itself a deadly principle. As previously mentioned, it was by the presence of the two trees in the Garden that Adam and Eve were given the freedom to choose to obey either God's or Satan's principle.

Tragically for God, for us, and for the whole universe, they chose Satan's dual principle of *good and evil*. Since that one fateful choice, we are all born into this mindset, and that is all we know. It is not surprising therefore that we mistakenly make God into one such as ourselves. Our perception of God does not change who He really is, but it does affect our relationship to Him, as it affected Adam and Eve's. The purpose of this book is to help us see that all of God's activities are governed only by the single principle represented

by the *tree of life*. Under no circumstances whatsoever does God ever utilize Satan's death principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The two trees enable us to see and to know without question that the embodiment of the death principle can originate only from Satan's rule of law, because God's rule of law is represented by the *tree of life*.

The Bible further makes it crystal clear that God's principles are represented by the *tree of life* and not by the tree of death, for in the renewed earth, as depicted in the book of Revelation, there is no mention of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*; it will cease to exist, as will death. In the new earth there will be only the *tree of life*, from which the healing of the nations will come. If God operated in any way from the principle that *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represented, then *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* would also exist throughout eternity, because *good and evil* would be in God Himself. As such, it would be an eternal principle, as God is eternal. The *tree of life* is a symbol of God's life-giving power, the principle of unconditional love, the only eternal principle. It is this life-force, this infinite love which will heal the nations and give us eternal life.

The study of the Bible reveals that, tragically, all darkness was introduced in the universe and in the world by the angel called Lucifer, who, ironically, was also named the 'son of the morning.' Meaning literally 'day star' or 'light bearer,' Lucifer was one of the two covering cherubs in the throne room of God (Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:14). After iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15), the next time he surfaces in the biblical account is in the book of Genesis as the 'cunning' Serpent, seducing Eve to eat the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

An in-depth study of the iniquity found in Lucifer will reveal that this tree embodies all of Satan's principles and laws with which he hoped to replace the eternal law of God. Death itself is the ultimate outcome of eating from this tree, as declared by God Himself. Further study of these issues shows that God had no part whatsoever in the introduction, administration, or the eventual effects of Satan's law symbolized by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Not even in the slightest way does God utilize the rule of law represented by this tree.

Were God to take part in any so-called works of darkness, He would then be the rightful author of all the deadly ramifications from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. These would be logically attributed to Him, as they presently are, but were that the case, God would cease to be the God of *agape* love. Without understanding this incontrovertible fact, we have attributed, and will continue to attribute to God a character which operates by the principles of *good and evil* and not *agape*, and will believe that He governs the universe by the dual, or hybrid rule of law of *good and evil*.

The final questions we must ask ourselves are these: if *good and evil* and *agape* are two antithetical principles, could they possibly co-exist in the one true God of the universe? And if they are not two irreconcilable and antithetical principles, then are they just different attributes of the God of love? Failing to arrive at the correct answer to these two questions will certainly result in Satan, rather than God, being worshipped, for we will be worshiping the Creator only in name but not in character; not in spirit and in truth.

These questions are being asked in utmost sincerity, profound humility and with a deep-rooted desire for answers about this God that we all worship. Whether we realize it or not, we all possess an insatiable hunger and thirst for God. We, who profess to believe in Him, all worship our God with the deepest of devotion, even if in different ways. All religions have ardent followers of God under their respective religious paradigms. Even atheists have an emptiness that can be filled only by God. However, it must be stressed that this book has no intention whatsoever, whatever the circumstances, of challenging anyone's beliefs in a negative way. All arguments here are simply and passionately presented from the Bible, and the conclusions arrived sincerely propose a radically different view of God and religion, with a view to opening our eyes to the love and loveliness of our Creator and Redeemer.

The bedrock foundation for these conclusions is based on what transpired on the cross when Jesus Christ died for the sins of the entire human race. As the head and the cornerstone of the church, Jesus is the ultimate and final authority on biblical truth, and He and no one else should be the focus of all our studies.

These findings are confirmed when the Bible is interpreted with the cross

principle as the sole foundation of biblical interpretation. All Christians agree that Jesus is the central theme of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Why should not the Bible be interpreted using the principles derived from Jesus' greatest work, His death on the cross? For a sincere understanding of God's character, the principle of the cross, and no other, should be utilized in biblical interpretation. Whenever God is portrayed in the Bible as doing Satan's work of death and destruction, we must turn to the principle of the cross, *agape* love, for a true understanding of the situation in question:

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20).

The law is God's law of agape love as commanded by the one true God of the universe. Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 respectively state:

*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul,
and with all your strength,*

and,

*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children
of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the
LORD.*

In the New Testament, Jesus confirmed the law of love:

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:35-40).

Paul also states:

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10).

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Galatians 5:14).

The testimony spoken of in Isaiah 8:20 is the testimony of Jesus Christ regarding the character of God. Revelation 12:17 declares that these two, the law and testimony of Jesus Christ, will bring the wrath of Satan upon the church, that is, upon those who have the two:

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The testimony of Jesus Christ is none other than His revelation of God’s character, for only Jesus Christ had the full knowledge of God’s character. This knowledge was expressed in His life and death.

John the Baptist gives this testimony about Jesus Christ, confirming His ultimate and sole authority by the heavenly credentials that only He held:

He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:31–36).

The apostle Paul, likewise, used no other authority but that which was revealed and given to him by Jesus Christ:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1–2).

For the most part, our worship of God has regrettably been based on a mistaken, incorrect and untrue knowledge of Him. For the most part, our worship of God has remained a worship based on the knowledge given to us by the old covenant, from which God is calling us to come out. This is shown to us in the book of Hebrews, where God promises to put His law of *agape* love in our hearts, the promise of a new covenant:

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to banish away (Hebrews 8:8–13).

Humanity’s initial flawed knowledge of God’s character and law of *agape* love has become obsolete, as the verse says: *He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

When this is accomplished we will be enormously blessed with such an intense love, respect and appreciation for God that all our energy and passion will glorify Him. When this transformation takes place in us, we will vindicate His character of pure, unalloyed *agape* love. Even though such a transformation appears to be a formidable endeavor, God’s grace is sufficient for the task of vindicating His character and increasing our love and appreciation for Him even more.

The answer to the question, Who is this one and only Creator God of the universe that most of humanity wants to know and worship ‘in spirit and in truth?’ may be attained as we behold this our God in the immaculateness of His essence of *agape* love as was demonstrated on the cross. Only there will His character be apprehended in its pristine purity. Any contamination or even a minuscule tainting of the immaculate purity of His character will

unequivocally defile the human mind, and the result will be a devastating reaping of desolation and chaos. One may argue that even though our perceptions may be tainted, we cannot actually taint or contaminate God's character by such perceptions. Nonetheless, by hanging on to our erroneous beliefs, we are still defaming His character, and this will cease only when our minds are cleansed from Satan's lies.

There is a God-created void in the human heart that can be filled only by God Himself. Yet the true knowledge about this one and only Creator God of the universe that is needed to enable us to worship Him in spirit and truth is sadly and painfully lacking. Our thinking that God is a Creator as well as a Destroyer is a misconception that has resulted in our worshipping Him with a sense of dread. When we do not know Him as He should be known, we worship Him only from fear of the consequences of not worshipping Him, a fear that may not even be acknowledged at the conscious level.

John's statement that *perfect love casts out fear* becomes pregnant with meaning when we behold Jesus dying on the cross, demonstrating His perfect *agape* love for all of us:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

This love was poured on us even, as Paul mentions, *while we were still sinners*:

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

As we apprehend fully the significance of the amazing unconditional love He demonstrated for us on the cross, we will no longer fear this God, and

we will then begin to worship Him in spirit and in truth. One may ask, ‘Will anyone ever fully comprehend God’s love?’ The answer is yes, to the extent that a human mind is capable of understanding the infinite God in the earthly sphere.:

*For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – **to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God** (Ephesians 3:14–19; emphasis added).*

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–13).*

The tainting of the purity of God’s *agape* love with attributes of vengeance and retribution results in the human mind being defiled with confusion and chaos. The previously quoted text from Isaiah 8, which says *to the law and to the testimony*, goes on to describe the desolation that will come to the human spirit due to an incorrect understanding of God, and describes what happens if we are derailed in our knowledge of God’s character. Without a knowledge of His true character we will be driven into utter darkness:

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their King and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness (Isaiah 8:20-22).

We will be driven into darkness because we believe in a God capable of causing such destruction, and we will curse our King and our God, for we will mistakenly think that He is the One responsible for these things.

Absolutely and unquestionably, there is a God of the universe. Absolutely and unquestionably, God has an antagonist and an adversary. Failure to understand these basic facts will undoubtedly result in a catastrophic deception that would cause us to inadvertently worship the wrong god.

No one will ever want to intentionally worship the wrong God. However, all of us who profess to be followers of God, and who under our varied religious convictions and affiliations believe that He is a destroyer, worship the wrong God. The entire human race has been duped into worshipping a god other than the one they believe they are worshipping when they believe that God is a destroyer. We are told in Revelation 12: 9 that Satan deceives the whole world. The 'whole' world includes all who have believed in a dual personality God, and that must surely include Christians as well. Humanity is worshipping the wrong god because it fails to know the character of the true God.

This may be extremely difficult to believe and accept, but sadly it is a reality. The adversary's mendacity is so ingeniously crafted, that without the cross principle, it would be impossible to discern the deception. Jesus told us that *false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24).*

Before we think that we are above falling for any such trickery, let us not forget that one third of the angels, pure, super-intelligent beings, were deceived by Satan's seemingly logical principle, along with Adam and Eve, our pristine parents, freshly created with superior intelligence in the image of

God.

God has provided the only way by which Satan will never be able to deceive us. If we look at Jesus Christ and His cross principle of unconditional, self-sacrificing love by which He took upon Himself all the fall-out for sin, we cannot be deceived by Satan's lies. The lies are ingenious because they are flawlessly presented and make complete logical and intellectual sense to the human mind. Without the divine wisdom that was given to us at the cross, it would have been impossible to penetrate this almost impenetrable lie.

God has chosen us to reveal His true character to the world. It is under our feet that Satan's head will be crushed:

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly (Romans 16:20).

Ephesians 3:10 states our role in this ongoing controversy between God and Satan:

*To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be **made known by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him (emphasis added).*

Finally, there is a universal and timeless law in existence which states that whatever we behold will impact our thinking and our lives. The principle that by beholding we become changed is a known fact and is biblically proven; what we behold will undoubtedly materialize in our lives:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever (Micah 4:5).

Our worldview is the result of that which we contemplate and behold, and our objective reality will impact our thinking and living either for weal or woe. How we perceive the character of the God we worship will undoubtedly affect our reaction to the very essence of Jesus' teaching, and will impact our inter-relationships in every facet of life. This is where 'the rubber meets the road' in Christianity:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34, 35).

According to Jesus, the greatest revelation of loving one another is manifested when we fulfill the most profound directive given to Him by God:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not

even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:43-48).

LUCIFER AND THE WAR IN HEAVEN

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you (Ezekiel 28:15).

From eternity past God ruled the universe with the law that emanates from the very essence of His being: the law of *agape* love. Holy angels and other created beings lived by this law without even thinking that they were doing so, for they had never known anything contrary to the joyous, happy and harmonious state- of-being they enjoyed under God's law of *agape* love. Their relationship with God was one of loving devotion, in which there was absolutely no fear.

The word "Lucifer" means "the daystar." Lucifer was also called "the son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12). The Biblical record of this being indicates that before iniquity was found in him, he was filled with light. The description of Lucifer depicts a creature of astounding intellect, beauty and power. Ezekiel says of him:

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardis, 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. 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. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you (Ezekiel 28:13-15)

The Cherubim

As an anointed cherub who covers, Lucifer held the closest position to God, a position shared by only one other, the prince and archangel Michael. In the earthly sanctuary, the covering cherubs were placed in the most holy place, the Holy of Holies. They covered the ark of the testament, which contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments, God's law of *agape* love.

As a shadow of things to come (Hebrews 10:1), and as representations of heavenly things (Hebrews 8:5), the earthly sanctuary was a symbol of the heavenly throne room of God, of His character and of His governing principles which are embodied in the law of *agape* love.

Lucifer was put in the holy height of God by God Himself: *I established you*. God Himself had placed Lucifer into His own bosom, giving him the most privileged position in the heavenly throne room along with only One other, and in His presence Lucifer was intimately acquainted with His law of unconditional love. As a covering cherub he was in fact a guardian of the law of God.

Lucifer Used To Live By God's Law Of Love

Love is God's very essence, His perfect character. Love is God's benchmark, His singular principle for the governance of every aspect of life. *Agape* love is the governing law that God utilizes even in the most infinitesimal events in the universe. It was with this perfect rule of love that Lucifer was created and this was the governing principle that initially ruled his character: *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.* This perfection that the Bible attributes to Lucifer means that he was in total harmony with God's supreme law of love from the beginning of his life. Thus from the day he was created, he fully believed, supported and promoted this eternal principle of love that God used for the running of the universe. What happened next is found in Ezekiel 28:15-17:

You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

When Iniquity Was Found In Lucifer

Ezekiel tells us that sin originated with Lucifer when iniquity was found in him. It is imperative that we comprehend this statement from Ezekiel 28: 15: *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.*

This verse clearly informs us that whatever iniquity was, it was found in Lucifer. It was first 'within' him. The genesis of iniquity in God's universe originated in the mind of Lucifer first as a thought. Initially, iniquity did

not demonstrate itself in any external empirical acts, thus revealing its depravity. All the actions that followed Lucifer's thoughts were sinful evil acts, but the iniquity that was found in him was first of all in his mind. The subsequent evil acts that took place were reactions to what had first begun in his thought processes and were the physical manifestation of those thoughts. The principle that one's thoughts precede and predict one's actions is laid out in Proverbs 23:7: *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he*. Jesus also confirmed this fact when He said that even lusting in one's heart was considered adultery

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28).

First and foremost, Lucifer cognitively deviated from the mind of God. Any concept that is contrary to *agape* love is in opposition to God and is irreconcilable to Him. Any deviation in the least particular from the eternal principle of God's *agape* love as the rule of law for the universe is utterly iniquitous. Therefore it was not some benign thought that Lucifer was harboring as he turned away from God's *agape* love. On the contrary, what he was contemplating was malignant and malevolent because the law he began to devise and which was later represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* was radically antithetical to God's *agape* love. The cross of Jesus reveals the height and depth of the evil that originated in the mind of Lucifer. His rule of law created havoc on planet earth and in the universe, and the cross is the ultimate confirmation of this fact.

Lucifer Rejected God's Very Essence, And Violence Was Introduced

The iniquity that was found in Lucifer was in effect the rejection of the very essence of God, and the law which God used for the governance of the universe. The essence of God is His nature which is His *agape* love. God's law is love. Lucifer sinned by rejecting God's love as the rule of law for the universe and by introducing a principle of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment which we shall refer to often as the principle of *good and evil*. This principle or law is responsible for all the death and destruction that planet earth has experienced. The law Lucifer devised, and which came to be represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* in the Garden of Eden, will be fully discussed in the next chapter.

The Difference Between Satan's Principle And God's Principle

The difference between God's principle of *agape* and Satan's principle of *good and evil* can be best understood through a comparison between Jesus' directive that we love our enemies, and the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth law of the Old Testament. Lucifer's law was arbitrary in that it proposed that all evil must be punished and all good must be rewarded. He clearly saw his new rule of law as a superior and more functional alternative to God's method for governance. Lucifer could not fathom how God's apparently permissive law of *agape* love could be successful in eradicating evil. To his new twisted mindset, God's law of *agape* love was ineffectual, dysfunctional, and utterly foolish.

The Bible tells us that God's law of love is nonsensical to us who live under the destructive power of the principle of *good and evil*. Take the following passage from 1 Corinthians, for instance:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but

to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:18-21).

For the message of the cross — Jesus' demonstration of God's law of love in giving His own life for the world — is foolishness to those who are perishing.

Who are those who are perishing? They are those who think and operate by Lucifer's arbitrary law of death and destruction. We must understand that it is not God who is making them perish; they are perishing because they adhere to the self-destructive principle of arbitrary reward and punishment. *But to us who are being saved — to us who are letting go of Lucifer's law of arbitrary reward and punishment — it is the power of God — the power of God's agape love in our inner hearts. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.'*

The ultimate spiritual supremacy of God's principle of love will destroy the so-called wisdom of the wise, because the wisdom of the wise is nothing but the principle of *good and evil*, which is a devilish wisdom. The wisdom of God will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Paul is saying that what appears to make sense to us is not necessarily the wisdom of God, and if we do not take heed, we, the so called prudent, may find ourselves believing and living by Satan's principle of *good and evil*.

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God — in the wisdom of His law of love — the world through wisdom — that is, through Lucifer's wisdom, a wisdom according to his law of good and evil — did not know God — it is impossible to know God if one believes and lives by the principle of good and evil — it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached, that is, the unconditional grace and agape love of God as shown by

the cross — *to save those who believe* — to save those who believe in God's law of love. In other words, to save them from the condemnation and destruction that is inherent in Satan's law of *good and evil*.

Lucifer's Law Is Based On Merit, And God's Law Is Unconditional

In Satan's law of *good and evil* the worth of an individual is based solely on merit and focuses on outward behavior. By contrast, in God's law of *agape* love a person is accepted and loved unconditionally in spite of whatever utterly depraved condition he or she may be in. In addition, it focuses on a heart relationship rather than on mere external conduct. To God, our intrinsic value lies in the fact that we are His children. Thus He unconditionally accepts us regardless of our performance. His unconditional acceptance is also the grace that uplifts us. Lucifer lost sight of his own worth in God's eyes due to his own law of *good and evil*, and thus he became self-condemned.

Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own mercy (Jonah 2:8).

The King James Version states:

They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

Lying vanities are the falsehoods taught by Satan through false doctrines. His lies steer the human soul away from the salvation that is inherent in God's principle of unconditional love, and it is thus that *they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy*. In Jeremiah 8:19, the word 'vanities' is clearly tied in with falsehood as well, again, in the KJV:

Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with

strange vanities (Jeremiah 8:19)?

The basic problem with the worship of graven images is that they teach *strange vanities* in regard to the character of God. More specifically, the god taught by graven images is a god who does not have a character of love, but rather, a character of *good and evil*. These gods require sacrifice, bestow punishment, and have no regard for humanity.

When we are admonished not to take the Lord's name in vain in the third commandment, we are also told that *the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain* (Exodus 20:7). Anyone who believes in lying vanities regarding God cannot have their guilt removed, for they are condemned by the inherent condemnation present in the principle of *good and evil*. Once we believe Jesus' message from the Father, our guilt is removed by the knowledge of our unconditional acceptance by God because of His *agape* love.

God's Law Of Unconditional Love

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus explained the differences between God's law of *agape* love and the law of *good and evil*. He did so in no uncertain terms and in the most simple and lucid way, which only One who had the ultimate authority could do:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 'But I say to you, love your enemies' (Matthew 5:43).

Please note how the apostle Paul confirms Jesus' law of love. As a lawyer of the Torah, he does it in a more legal way, but in essence he is saying the same thing that Jesus said:

*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.
But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the
ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness (Romans 4:4, 5).*

Justifying the ungodly and loving one's enemies amount to the same thing. God, in His *agape* love, justifies the ungodly. Satan, through the principle of *good and evil*, condemns and punishes the ungodly.

Satan's Law Brought Violence And Death Into The Universe

Because Lucifer's principle uses arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment as behavioral motivators, violence and death came into the universe through this law. In *agape* love there is no violence or death. Violence and death, in its wider, all-encompassing application, is iniquity; therefore Lucifer's rule of law was iniquitous. In its broad application, sin, the antithetical principle to God's *agape* love, when fully accepted and executed, incorporates violence that leads to death. To put it simply, iniquity equals *good and evil*, causes violence and death, and is contrary to God's *agape* love. This was the iniquity that was found in Lucifer and his rule of law.

Lucifer Rejected God's Law Of Agape Love And Introduced The Law Of Good And Evil

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 (Isaiah 14:13-14).

When Lucifer said in his heart that he would ascend above all and be like the Most High, it was the first time ever in the universe that a sinless being

rebelled against God's indivisible law of love. Lucifer devised a method of governance which he hoped would not only rival but surpass God's law of *agape* love, and he went about promoting his law to the rest of the intelligent beings in the universe. His highest ambition was to *sit on the mount of the congregation (Isaiah 14:13)* and be worshipped. What in effect that meant was that he wanted to eventually rule the universe, *the congregation*, by his own rule of law. This was the foundational reason for his rebellion, and the law he devised was a divisible, hybrid law, the law of *good and evil*.

God Gave Lucifer The Freedom To Develop His New Law

As we have already seen, Lucifer's law germinated in his mind and in his mind only, and in its embryonic stage his turning away from God began in the form of a questioning thought, which in the course of time developed into full-blown rebellion. In order for him to be able to translate his thoughts into practical actions, he needed freedom, which he amply had under God's law of *agape* love. The law he was beginning to devise was antithetical to God's unitary, unmixed, indivisible law of unconditional love, which had governed the universe from eternity past.

The consequences of Lucifer's rebellion against God's rule of law were of a character that had until then been unknown in the universe, and were in fact unknown to Lucifer himself. God warned him of these consequences and tried to dissuade him from proceeding in his dangerous, disastrous path. The immediate result of introducing this hybrid rule of law of *good and evil* was that Lucifer himself acquired and developed a character that was a hybrid. With a hybrid law and a hybrid character, which was a reflection of his own law, he became solely responsible for the introduction of the death principle into the universe, thus founding the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of the shadow of death. It was to save us from the consequences of the principles of this kingdom that Jesus, the great light, came to earth:

“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned” (Matthew 4:16).

Lucifer Lied About God’s Character And Law

Prior to the introduction of Lucifer’s principle in the transcendent sphere, all intelligent beings lived by God’s supreme rule of law. In reality, God’s law was nothing but a reflection of His character of love. As Lucifer presented his own law to the heavenly beings, he concurrently taught them lies about God’s character and about His supreme law for the governance of the universe.

Now the universe was confronted with a law that was antithetical to God’s law. After being exposed to Lucifer’s new law, one third of the angels accepted him as their leader, and so he became their teacher. It is sobering to ponder that what Lucifer presented to the angels was so overwhelmingly convincing that one third of the angels accepted his rule of law and considered it superior to God’s law of love:

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth (Revelation 12:3, 4a).

As he severed all dependence upon God and His law, Lucifer independently established his own law for the administration of the universe, thus positioning himself, so he claimed, as an autonomous being, and superior to God:

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 side of the north (Isaiah 14: 13, 14).

Satan's Law Of Good And Evil Is A Hybrid

The law Lucifer devised was intrinsically antithetical to God's unitary, un-mixed, indivisible law of unconditional *agape* love, which had governed the universe from eternity past. The hybrid rule of law he introduced resulted in his (and subsequently the angels that followed him, as well as the human race) acquiring and developing a dual character. Acquiring a dual character of *good and evil* was the foundational and inevitable consequence of Lucifer's rebellion against God's rule of law. With his hybrid law and consequent hybrid character reflecting his hybrid law, he is solely responsible for introducing the death principle in the universe, the results of which are all of the works of darkness.

Lucifer Becomes Satan

After his rebellion, as his character came to reflect his own law, Lucifer became the devil, Satan, which means the adversary and accuser of God. He then became the first false god in the universe, and the Bible refers to him by many different names besides 'Satan' and 'the Devil.'

According to Jesus, he is the prince of this world and he holds *the power of darkness*:

*Now is the judgment of this world; now **the ruler of this world** will be cast out (John 12:31; emphasis added).*

*When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the **power of darkness** (Luke 22:53; emphasis added),*

The apostle Paul also calls him *the power of darkness* as well as *the god of this*

age:

*He has delivered us from **the power of darkness** and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13; emphasis added).*

*... 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 (2 Corinthians 4:4; emphasis added).*

In the book of Revelation chapter 12:9, the serpent, also known as the dragon, is identified as *that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan*. In the Greek language the words for dragon, serpent, Devil, and Satan, are respectively, “drakon [a fabulous kind of serpent, (perhaps as supposed to fascinate)],” “ophis [related to optonomai optomai (to gaze, that is, with eyes wide open as at something remarkable) (thorough the idea of sharpness of vision) a snake, figuratively (as a type of sly cunning) an artful malicious person, especially Satan-serpent],” “diabolos [a traducer, specifically Satan, false accuser, slanderer], and satanas [the accuser],” (Strong’s Concordance).

The War In Heaven

The results of the schism between God and Lucifer are reported in the book of Revelation 12:7-9 in the following way:

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out

with him.

This passage relates that a war broke out in heaven. What kind of war broke out in heaven, and when did this specific war break out? In order for us to get a correct understanding of the issues at hand, it is imperative that we understand what kind of war broke out in heaven. Was this some militaristic type of war with extremely advanced weapons which our limited, puny minds have as of yet not imagined?

The Greek Word For War Is Polemos

A quick study of the original Greek in the above passage reveals that the word used to represent the war in heaven is the word *polemos*, from which the English word ‘polemic’ evolved. The Cambridge Dictionary describes the word polemic as “a piece of writing or a speech in which a person strongly attacks or defends a particular opinion, idea or sets of beliefs.”

With this understanding it becomes clear that the passage in Revelation 12 is not referring to a literal war but is figuratively describing an intense debate of ideas and sets of principles. This polemic occurred between God and Lucifer, while the angels were at first bystanders who eventually had to make a choice over which side they would stand. This passionate and powerful debate occurred in the transcendent realm between God, the protagonist, and Satan, the antagonist. We are told that eventually Satan and the angels that chose to side with him did not prevail.

War In Heaven Was Spiritual Warfare

This was not, as mentioned above, by any means a militaristic, literal war but an intense, passionate, powerful debate. This polemic occurred between God and His angels, and Satan and his angels. But the devil, Satan, who deceives

the whole world, would like us to believe that it was a war in which violence was involved and used by both sides. Not so. God's methods in the war in question are quite different from Satan's methods. We may get a glimpse of His methods from the following passage in Isaiah 63, in which God's fury and anger is manifested through the only and ultimate weapon He had: Jesus Christ on the cross, the ultimate revelation of God's law of *agape* love.

*Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This one who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength? — “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. **For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury;** Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come” (Isaiah 63:1-4; emphasis added).*

Notice that the above passage is referring to the cross, the winepress of God's wrath. It is not a wrath that manifests itself in punishment toward anyone, but a wrath which takes the punishment upon itself, shouldering the consequences of all our sins. God's vengeance, a human word, is to speak in righteousness, to save mightily, to redeem. These are the only weapons at His disposal, for they only are in harmony with His character.

Satan deceives the whole world into believing that God uses military power that involves violence in His warfare against evil. Thus it is that the whole world, and especially those in the world who are under the banner of religious belief, is using violence in its deceived thinking against those who are perceived as enemies. The foundational reason for such violence is based on the belief system that proposes that God condones violence when circumstances necessitate it. It is Satan who has caused such deception to abound in people's concept of God, and it is for that reason that the consequent

reigning carnage abounds in the world.

Earth's Inhabitants Adopted Satan's Law

In one of His parables Jesus said that there were one hundred sheep, but only one went astray. In the cosmic scale of things, the one sheep that went astray represents the earth. The rest of the universe, except for one third of the angels, did not believe or accept Lucifer's new law. Through Adam and Eve's partaking of the fruit of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, the earth was the only planet in the universe to adopt Satan's law.

Not surprisingly then, we, Adam and Eve's descendants, have fallen prey to Satan's rule of law and use it as the guiding principle in our lives. Every institution on planet earth is governed by Lucifer's principle from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. From our human perspective, the law of *good and evil* represents a workable system of administration. We have accepted his law as an ethical and moral philosophy for existence. That is precisely what Lucifer originally advocated when he introduced his system of governance in the universe. In fact, we have not only accepted Lucifer's rule of law, but we have also gone even a step further, in that we also, like Lucifer, believe that his law is better than God's.

In one way or another all of us promote and live by the arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment concept of life. Even as we look at other people, we judge and weigh each person in the balance of this system, and from its set of principles we decide whether to reward or punish them. Jesus warned us that judging and finding fault in others is in itself a greater sin than the actual faults we may find in them:

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye (Matthew 7:1-3)?

By using the principle of Lucifer to judge others we judge our own selves and show that his law is our operating principle. By weighing others on Satan's balance of merit and worth, we disregard God's law of unconditional *agape* love and again demonstrate that we are following Satan's law. The plank in our eye is our usage of the system of arbitrary reward and punishment found in the system of *good and evil* which we use instead of God's unconditional law of love. Jesus characterizes this as a grosser flaw, a beam that is much bigger than the splinter in our brother's eye.

Our acceptance and promotion of this satanic system of administration also proves the erudite nature of Satan's rule of law, because intellectually, like one third of the angels, we have believed in his principle. His law is so profound that he has made us believe the unbelievable.

Lucifer Accuses God Of Using The Law Of Good And Evil

It cannot be overemphasized that the genesis of Lucifer's rule of law in the universe was in direct opposition to God's rule of law, which was represented by the *tree of life* in the Garden of Eden.

Lucifer had proposed his law to God claiming that it was superior to God's own law. As God rejected his proposal to implement his law of *good and evil*, Lucifer began to use a different strategy in his opposition to Him. He attributed to God his own rule of law and caused all to believe that God operated from the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* under which, if you do good, God supposedly arbitrarily rewards you, and if you do evil, He arbitrarily punishes you.

To begin with, it is astonishing that we have accepted Satan's system of administration on planet earth. But by believing the lie that it was God who instituted this law, we have truly fallen deep into a pit from which even God may not be able to rescue us. Judas is a good example of this: no matter how much grace Jesus Christ showed him, he could not believe and accept that he was forgiven and consequently took his own life.

As inconceivable as it may seem, it is nevertheless a reality that we now

believe that Satan's law of *good and evil* is God's law of governance. Satan's peddling of an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth was so masterfully and convincingly done that intellectually it was easy to accept a God who used retribution as part of his justice. This has become the accepted belief system of Satan, a third of the angels, and of all humanity.

The Abundance Of Satan's Merchandise Contained Violence

The *Star Wars* scenario, the fight of good against evil, is the ultimate deception, and is not at all what took place in heaven. George Lucas' Luke Skywalker, the good guy, uses the same violent methods as his nemesis, Darth Vader. That was not the case in the polemic that took place in heaven. As we read earlier in Isaiah, violence came into the universe by the abundance of Lucifer's merchandise. What was his merchandise?

*By the abundance of your **trading** You became filled with **violence within**, And you **sinned** (Ezekiel 28:16; emphasis added).*

Lucifer's *trading* was a law which operated on a principle of violence. Through this law he introduced violence and removed the freedom of choice of God's creatures. Violence did not exist in the universe prior to his introducing it. The war in heaven was a spiritual war over which method of government was to prevail as the governing law for the universe, and the law Lucifer was proposing was filled with violence. God found Himself involved in a war that indeed involves violence, but He Himself uses only unconditional love in His dealings within that war. God never did, and never will use violence of any form.

Satan Used To Present Himself Before The Lord In Heaven

The book of Job tells us that Satan used to have access in the heavenly sphere even after sin entered the earth:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth in it" (Job 1:6-8).

The sons of God were sinless intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere, representatives of other worlds. They are not angels, for angels are referred to as stars in the Scriptures. From this verse we see that they periodically would attend meetings at which God presided, for they came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan came to these meetings as the representative of the earth, a position he usurped from Adam. If the reader recalls, Adam had been given dominion over the earth, but now we see Satan in command in Adam's stead. As the representative of the earth, he and his angels, who roamed the earthly sphere, also had access to the heavenly domain.

How And When Lucifer Was Cast Down

Satan's access to heaven came to a halt at a certain time, for in the book of Revelation we learn that he was cast out from heaven to the earth:

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his

angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:9).

At this point the reader may ask: ‘Does this text not imply that violence was used against Satan in order to cast him out of heaven?’ We must look to Jesus for the answer, because only He is the final word, the final wisdom. In fact He gives us the wisdom of God Himself:

*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who **became for us wisdom from God** – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30–31; emphasis added).*

Jesus tells us exactly when it was that Lucifer was cast out of heaven and by what means. The answer is found in John 12:31 as Jesus speaks about the upcoming event of the cross:

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

The question we must ask ourselves is, what does Jesus mean by the word *now*? We must look at the context surrounding this revelation and find out what event the word *now* is tied to, so that we may understand not only when he was cast out, but also why and how:

“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I came to this hour. ‘Father, glorify Your name.’” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it

and will glorify it again.” Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die (John 12:27–33).

Putting together this passage from John with the previous passage from Revelation, we may first of all safely affirm that Satan, the ruler of this world, was cast out from heaven to the earth. He was not cast out from the earth, for he is still ruling here in this world. A time is coming when he will also be cast out from the earth, but that time is still in the future.

It was as the representative of this world that the ruler of the earth was cast out from the heavenly councils at the time referred to as *now*. It is clear that the *now* that Jesus is talking about is the event of the cross, and it coincides with the casting out of Revelation 12:9. Jesus is pointing to the cross, that event when and where He would be glorified, and when and where Satan and God will both be seen for who they really are.

The scenario and issues surrounding Lucifer’s expulsion can then be summarized like this: prior to the cross Lucifer had been able to convince a third of the angels that his rule of law was better and more desirable than God’s. The other two thirds had not joined him in the rebellion and remained loyal to God. Because Lucifer worked through deception and lies, he created confusion and uncertainty, and the angels that remained loyal to God did not yet understand all the issues involved in this war of principles. It could be said that prior to the cross they had accepted God’s warnings by faith. But at the cross they finally saw through Satan’s lies and deception with their own eyes. They understood that God would rather die for His children than destroy them, and that Lucifer was indeed a murderer who, if possible, would destroy even the Son of God. They came to see for themselves that Satan’s accusations that God uses the principle of *good and evil* were a blatant lie.

Hence, from here onward they would not move their allegiance from God, regardless of any further manipulations on Satan's part. The intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere sealed their faith in God and in His rule of law because of the infinite love that was demonstrated on the cross. Also at the cross, Satan's iniquitous rule of law was fully exposed for the evil it truly is.

The War In Heaven Ceases

Thus the war in the transcendent sphere was eternally won, settled, and sealed, and Satan became a defeated foe in that realm. There is a passage in Romans that says that Satan will be crushed under our feet, and even though that verse applies to us, we could say that the God of peace did crush Satan under the heavenly beings' feet as well (Romans 16:20). They crushed him when they rejected him. The crushing was done under their feet because it was their rejection of Satan's law that crushed him. When the truth shone forth, the polemic reached an end, all minds made their decision, and Satan was cast out. As his lies and deceptions could no longer persuade the heavenly beings to accept his rule of law or false claims about God, he is portrayed as being cast out. In other words, his attempts to influence them would be forever unfruitful and his arguments ever rejected.

Satan had no further grounds or reasons to justify his presence in the transcendent sphere to which he previously had unhindered access. We have seen that the Book of Job confirms the accessibility he had to the heavenly sphere prior to the cross event. After the cross, there was nothing more he could say negatively about God that would be believed, for the truth about his rule of law was fully exposed. The utter chaos and violence in his rule of law had been unveiled, and any further appeals to try and justify his system were in vain.

God's essence, His character of *agape* love, His supreme rule of law of the universe, was fully vindicated in the transcendent sphere by what happened on the cross, and it was literally impossible for Satan to sway any of the heavenly beings back into his way of thinking about God after the cross event. They did

not even want to hear from him anymore, and it was chiefly in this sense he was cast out of heaven as stated in Revelation chapter twelve. Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven not by an arbitrary violent act of God but as the consequence of the light of the truth that had shined from the cross.

The Cross Was The Turning Point In The Polemic

Until the cross event Satan and his angels resolutely believed they still could try to convince the intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere to see the folly in God's law of *agape* love. Revelation 12:10 also reveals that they unceasingly, day and night, kept in contact with the heavenly domain until their defeat by the event of the cross:

*Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, **who accused them before our God day and night**, is cast down (Revelation 12:10, emphasis added).*

The words *now, the salvation, power, kingdom of our God and authority of His Christ* in the above text all refer to the event that took place on the cross and to the time period that followed it. Satan and his angels now knew for certain, given what had transpired on the cross, that there was absolutely no possibility whatsoever for them to convince their former colleagues to ever turn around to their point of view. Because of the event on the cross they were completely defeated and they knew that nothing they could say or do would ever change the minds of their erstwhile associates. Therefore, in complete defeat they permanently stopped all form of communication with them. As the principle of *good and evil* was unmasked on the cross, and as God's *agape* love was also fully revealed there, Satan and his angels did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer:

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:7-9).

Satan...was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him after the death of Jesus Christ on the cross revealed that God is love (1 John 4:16b).

Thus the death of Jesus Christ was in fact the only weapon, so to speak, that God used in His war with Satan.

As Satan lost this war and was cast to the earth along with his angels, his defeat caused the following proclamation of triumph to be made in heaven:

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation [FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF GOOD AND EVIL], and strength, and the kingdom of our God [HIS LAW OF AGAPE LOVE], and the power of His Christ [REVELATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD] have come [TO THE EARTH, ON THE CROSS], for the accuser [SATAN] of our brethren [HUMANITY], who accused them before our God day and night [BY THE PRINCIPLE OF GOOD AND EVIL], has been cast down." And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb [SHED ON THE CROSS] and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death [RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE] (Revelation 12:10; emphasis added).

Thus the Lord and His perfect law of love have prevailed in the heavenly domain and we are given a picture of rejoicing among the heavenly beings:

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them (Revelation 12:12)!

The Other Worlds Watched The Cross In Amazement

All the other intelligent beings, those who had not accepted Lucifer's rule of law in the transcendent sphere, had also remained faithful to God and to His rule of law even though they too did not fully understand all the issues involved. God informed them that *agape* love and arbitrary punishment can never coexist, that arbitrary punishment, in principle, is anti-God. He had warned them that arbitrary punishment would be an alien, evil entity, an invasion, an intrusion in His system of ruling the universe. The un-fallen beings of the universe trusted God and accepted His explanation without completely comprehending the depth of the evil resulting from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. God had told them that He would take personally upon Himself whatever punishment was engendered by evil. They were left in reverent wonderment as to how God was going to take care of evil and its punishment personally. They were oblivious as to what God meant by saying that He would take care of that punishment personally until, in absolute amazement, they watched the death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

Heavenly Beings Unanimously And With Finality Choose God Over Satan

When Jesus died on Calvary, all of Lucifer's accusation against God and His rule of law of *agape* love were exposed as lies to all of the heavenly intelligent beings that had remained faithful to God. Now their acceptance of God's love as a rule of government for the universe was authenticated. What they observed, in amazement, on the cross, confirmed their faith in all that God had told them. It was settled for them that Lucifer's principle of arbitrary punishment was

the embodiment of evil.

Satan and his angelic minions no longer bothered to approach the intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere in the effort to convince them to defect because they had now chosen God and His rule of law of *agape* love over him and his law. God's character and rule of law remained inviolable and vindicated. For these beings, the event of the cross permanently disproved all the lies Satan had propagated against God's character and method of governing. Satan's head was crushed throughout the un-fallen populated universe in this respect. He knew he could not convince them anymore to renounce God's rule of law and accept his. They now clearly saw God's *agape* love for sinful humanity being demonstrated by Jesus Christ as He died on the cross.

The Pivotal Importance Of The Cross Of Christ

In Ephesians 3:8-11, Paul tells us that it is by events that transpire on earth that the heavenly beings are learning the wisdom of God, things that were not before known:

*To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which **from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God** who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that **now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places**, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord (emphasis added).*

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross unequivocally confirmed for the intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere what they had firmly believed about God by faith. Now the demonstration on the cross was validated not only by faith but also by sight. They observed God's *agape* love as Jesus Christ took upon Himself the entirety of humanity's sins and all its fall-out, dying the

death for every human being. Here was revealed God's personal experience as He took all the punishment for all of humanity's sins, a punishment due to them from Satan's law. The character of God and His law of love, which had been saturated with the malicious lies and accusations of Satan, were cleansed and restored to their rightful place in the minds of all the intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere. It was at the cross that Satan and his system were fully exposed for all of its evil.

The Cross Defeated Satan In Heaven; Now He Is Concentrating On Planet Earth

The Great War between God and Satan over the minds of all intelligent beings as to whose rule of law was to prevail in the universe had with certainty been settled in the transcendent sphere, but that is not yet the case on the earth:

*Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! **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; emphasis added).*

Satan and his angels did not prevail in the transcendent sphere, and that was wholly due to the events that had transpired in the earthly domain, and more specifically, on the cross. Here the visible, the cross, reveals the invisible, that is, what happened in heaven. But on earth the war is still raging in the minds of all living beings. Each one of us is still deciding whether God is a God of violence or not, and this will go on until the sealing takes place, that is, until we become settled in our minds, one way or another. As this happens, Satan will realize that his kingdom is coming to an end:

*...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** (emphasis added).*

How does Satan know that he has a short time? And why does he have only a short time? The answer lies in the next words of the above text:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death (Revelation 12: 11).

Looking into the future, the prophetic word of God predicted that the human race will also overcome the dragon, who accuses them before God day and night. As Satan sees that the true character of God is being understood on the earth, and that humanity realizes that violence is not of God, he will see that his time is short. As we turn from using violence in our lives and begin living by unconditional love, our actions will be a sign to him that his time is short. And as he sees that he is losing this war here on earth, his fury will increase and we will see more and more violence abounding around us by those who side with him.

The rule of law, the principle, the method that defeated Satan and his angels in the heavenly domain will be the same rule of law, the same principle, the same method that will cause Satan and his angels not to prevail in the earthly sphere. When God's law of *agape* love, as it was revealed on the cross, is accepted and lived out in our lives, then the verse *Christ in you, the hope of glory* will be fulfilled (*Colossians 1:27*). We will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. The blood of the Lamb was shed on the cross, revealing a love for the human race that words cannot describe. We will also overcome by the *word of our testimony*. Our response to this love will be shown in that we will *not love our lives to the death* (*Revelation 12:11*).

The devil was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. They have come to the earth with great fury and are now *the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night*. But what do the true followers of God do, those who know and demonstrate God's character of righteousness, those who are accused before our God day and night? They overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the unconditional *agape* love principle that Jesus demonstrated by His death. They have also ceased to be accusers themselves, because they now have unconditional love and acceptance as the operating principle of their lives.

Agape love was the spiritual weapon of war that defeated Satan and his angels in the transcendent sphere, and that defeat took place when, on the cross, Jesus said *it is finished* (John 19:30). Even though Satan was defeated at the cross, the application of this defeat in the earthly sphere is still to be completed. But he will be defeated by the same spiritual weapon when we grasp and live out God's *agape* love in our lives.

Satan Lost The War At The Cross By Using The Principle Of Good And Evil

Satan maximized all his resources under the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, in order to execute the Son of God. The epitome of evil was perpetrated and unleashed on the innocent incarnate Son of God on the cross. Satan believed that once he had achieved his goal of killing the Son of God, he would be the victor over God in his war. He thought that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross would uproot and abolish God's rule of law, and he would have won the debate with God as to whose system of governance was superior. But this event unequivocally confirmed and demonstrated the opposite. Satan was cast out from the transcendent sphere and those who, in the earthly sphere, will gain victory over Satan's principles will exclaim:

"Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true

are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested (Revelation 15:3, 4).

The word *fear* in this context means ‘to be in awe of, i.e. revere’ (Strong’s Concordance). God was in Christ at the cross, reconciling the world to Himself. Was it God who inflicted the punishment that Jesus experienced on the cross for the sins of the world? Do we believe that God mandated that Jesus Christ must die for the sins of the world in order to deflect His wrath from us, evil, ungodly humanity? Did Jesus Christ choose to die the death of the cross in order to appease God’s absolute abhorrence toward ungodly humans?

The apostle Paul states that the opposite is the case: that *God was in Christ* on the cross – with Jesus Christ:

...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5: 19–21).

God allowed Jesus Christ, on the cross and in unison with Himself, to go into Satan’s domain and experience the full effects of sin. It was this unity that revealed the Father’s and the Son’s *agape* love for sinful humanity. Furthermore, this event has unequivocally demonstrated the superiority of God’s law in contrast to Satan’s rule of law. Under no circumstances must it ever be thought that Jesus Christ and God are at odds with each other in regards to the sinful human race. This fact is pivotal in understanding the truth about God’s character. Unfortunately, many Christians believe that Jesus

died to appease an angry God. The apostle Paul refuted this error with this ringing conclusion:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He, who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).

The Father Himself Loves You

As Jesus Christ approached the threshold of His death on the cross, He further expounded this truth. In the most simple and endearing term known to the entire human race, He imparts this information about God. By addressing God as the Father, Abba, Daddy, Jesus has removed all misunderstanding about God's character:

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you

*have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language, but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for **the Father Himself loves you**, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God (John 16: 23–27; emphasis added).*

The words *plainly about the Father* and *in that day*, and *but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language*, all refer to the upcoming cross event that would reveal the character of God. The reality contained in the words *I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you* would also be shortly revealed by the cross event.

The apostle Paul tells us with certainty that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself at the cross. That being the case, then why would He need Jesus as an intercessor to appease His wrath?

*Now all things are of God, who **has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, **that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them**, and **has committed to us the word of reconciliation**. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:18–21; emphasis added).*

God was in Christ when Jesus experienced the complete effects of sin on the cross. Through this united act with Jesus Christ, God was *not imputing their trespasses to them*. Jesus Christ was the sinner's intercessor but not in a

negative sense. We believe and promote, from the Bible, that God indeed had a need for an intercessor, but in the sense that He needed Jesus to reveal to the world that He was not an angry God. Jesus came to reveal the opposite of the prevailing negative view regarding His work of intercession: *I shall not pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you.*

It could not be made any clearer that God is not ascribing humanity's sins to them, and this revelation is made possible because of what transpired on the cross. By this revelation of His *agape* love it is expected that we will know He is not the one responsible for the death of His creatures and the destruction of His creation. Destruction is not a punishment from God because of sin, but the result of another power acting behind all this evil.

Rather Than Punish Us, God Took The Punishment Upon Himself

It must be noted that God's *agape* love becomes non-existent in humanity's thinking if it is adulterated in the least particular by the principles represented by the tree of the knowledge of *good and evil*. Consequently, it cannot be claimed that God is *agape* love if in any way this love is tainted by anything that is out of harmony with the principle of the cross. The only possible way this *agape* love can be comprehended at all in the human dimension is when one understands what God, in Jesus Christ, did on the cross at Calvary for the human race two thousand years ago. God, through Jesus Christ and in His moral justice, did not punish sinners for their sins but took the punishment upon Himself on the cross because of His *agape* love:

Because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25, 26).

God Had Warned And Implored Satan Not To Follow The Path Of Good and Evil

God had informed Lucifer that his rule of law would eventually implode, destroying himself and all his followers. God knew the full extent of the fall-out from Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and Satan had been informed accordingly. God had given him more than ample warning, even pleading with him not to pursue this rule of law he had formulated for him and all of his followers; but he would not accept God's counsel.

The sadness in God's heart caused by the loss of this archetypical prodigal son can be heard as a painful lament in the words of the prophet Isaiah and can evoke the same sentiment that was expressed by Jesus as He mourned and moaned over the fate of Jerusalem:

How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations (Isaiah 14:12)!

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing (Matthew 23:37)!

Satan believed he knew more and better than God, because from his perspective God's rule of law was unworkable when confronted with evil. Satan claimed that his rule of law would succeed in the presence of evil because of the arbitrary reward and punishment mechanism built into it. He was adamant that God's rule of law of *agape* love would definitely and definitively fail in the presence of evil because it lacked the arbitrary reward/punishment methodology for governance.

Even though when Satan introduced his system of governance he could not foresee the full extent of the chaos and carnage that would result from it, he is still held responsible for it. God had made him aware that his system of governance would create chaos that would be virtually non-stoppable. It would escalate to such a level that the carnage would become irreversible until it would finally implode. God told him that his rule of law would destroy him and all of his followers. The King James Version portrays that destructive scenario in Isaiah 14:6:

He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders.

The extent of the end result of Satan's principle is seen in Jesus' depiction of that future time when God's spirit will finally be rejected by those who remain faithful to Satan's principles. At that time, even familial love, the strongest of human ties, will be replaced by the principle of *good and evil*:

Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child: and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death (Matthew 10:21).

Satan and his followers will turn against each other and obliterate each other from the face of the earth through violence. Those who do not receive the gift of God's full acceptance and absolution through the true knowledge of His character will see only darkness ahead:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful

expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries (Hebrews 10:26, 27).

Self-Destruction Is The Inevitable Result Of The Principle Of Good And Evil

The beginning and the end for all the fall-out for sin are found within Satan's system itself. Ruin is intrinsic to his method of governance. Therefore it is only through a correct view of God that the following verse can be truly understood. By the same token, it is only through correctly understanding this verse can we have a true understanding of God:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

There is no question that sinners will die and be annihilated. But that is the case only because of the principle they live by. It is the principle itself that destroys them. Satan's system contains its own mechanism for implosion. Once it is initiated, Satan's principle will be propelled forward in the fashion of a snowball effect. It is as a fruit, which, once ripened, will fall to the ground and disintegrate. His violent principle's demise was certain from the time it was germinated, and it will continue to develop to its full-blown destructive force. Satan's principle will evolve into a massive, mega mountain of seething magma with burning fury from within. This evil system of governance will reach such a crescendo of violence that it will implode and explode like a volcano, destroying everything within its sphere of influence.

The destruction of Satan and his followers will be similar to the demolition of a skyscraper tower that collapses and is destroyed from within: his principle will do its destructive work from within, from its own rule of law. It has its own built-in mechanism for destruction, and this destruction is not done by any arbitrary act of God.

God Cannot Stop Satan's Eventual Destruction

Satan's system is so destructive that even God cannot stop it. Some argue that God has to allow it to burn itself out as a lesson for eternity; or that if God were to stop it mid-stream it would never reveal the depth of ignominy and evil within the system, therefore God must allow it to play itself out to the uttermost height of its destructive potentiality so that the whole universe may see it.

But the real reason why this evil system of governance will be allowed to consume all of its own contaminated evil and reach the pinnacle of its own annihilation, is because to the very end God remains true to His own principles and gives all His creatures their inalienable freedom of choice. God cannot stop the demise of Satan's principle because if He did, He would be infringing upon Satan's and his followers' freedom of choice.

Good and Evil Will Be The Reason For Lucifer's And His Follower's Death

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die** (Genesis 2:16-17; emphasis added).

Satan is using the principle from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* to govern the world. The basic nature, the sum and substance of his principle culminates in death because at its essence, it is the principle of death. There is no doubt that the principle of *good and evil* will eventually cause the death of Lucifer and his followers. If for no other reason, we may know this as a certainty for the simple fact that God predicted it would when He said *for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*.

2

WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF GOOD AND EVIL?

*The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the **knowledge of good and evil**...Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, '**Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die**'...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 2:8, 9, 15-17, 3:4, 5; emphasis added).*

The Principle Represented By The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil

We have seen that the principle Satan devised when he was still Lucifer, came to be represented on earth by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. What we shall often refer to as the principle of *good and evil* was a law devised by Lucifer, a law foreign to anything previously existing in the whole of the universe. He introduced and promoted the principle of *good and evil* with a definite purpose in mind. His intent was to replace God's law of love, because from his perspective, God's *agape* love, as the rule of law for the governance of the universe, was impractical, inoperative and unrealistic, especially in the face of evil. He in effect said to God, 'Your law of love works in a perfect world, but now that I have introduced a system contrary to Yours, what will Your law of love do?'

Please take judicious consideration of the fact that Lucifer's principle was not called *the knowledge of evil* but *the knowledge of good and evil*. Because we all know what Satan stands for, one would assume that everything about him would be evil, so what is the *good* in his law? As we explore his principle, we must keep in mind that he definitely envisioned and instituted *good* as an indispensable aspect in his rule of law represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. He positively did not want *evil* to be the sole feature in his law, but both *good* and *evil*.

Had Lucifer dealt only in *evil*, he would definitely not have had succeeded in acquiring any followers. But as noted in the previous chapter, he was able to take with him a third of the angels, therefore there must have been something very compelling and attractive about his principle. This hybrid of *good and evil* in Satan's principle is expounded in depth in this chapter and further developed throughout this book.

The Principle From The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil Is Arbitrary

The fundamental operating principle behind Lucifer's new law was the use of a dual set of behavior motivators, arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment, which makes his law a hybrid type of law, or principle. It arbitrarily rewards good behavior, or deeds, on one hand, while arbitrarily punishing evil behavior, or deeds, on the other. This principle is familiar to all of us, for we are steeped in it, and operate by it every day of our lives. Countries and institutions are built on this system, and it rules every facet of human relationships on earth. The world operates entirely by Satan's principle that was represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

Satan's Arbitrary Law Removes Our Freedom Of Choice

Lucifer's principle of *good and evil* removes the freedom of choice God had given to His creatures. His law is an arbitrary rule of law in which free will is non-existent because in this principle only Satan's will prevails. The Bible calls his law for governance iniquity, lawlessness, and it is his law that is sin with a capital 'S':

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (KJV).

Satan's death principle is the transgression of God's law of *agape* love, and it eventuates in the death of everyone who partakes of it.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

The Dictionary Definition Of The Word Arbitrary

The *Webster's Dictionary* defines the word *arbitrary* as “1: depending on individual discretion (as of a judge) and not fixed by law; 2: not restrained or limited in the exercise of power: ruling from the unrestrained and often tyrannical exercise of power; 3a: based on or determined by individual preference or convenience rather than by necessity of the intrinsic nature of something; 3b: existing or coming about seemingly at random or by chance or as a capricious and unreasonable act of will.”

Satan's Tyrannical And Arbitrary Rule Of Law Is Described By Jesus In The Parable Of The Unjust Judge

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterwards he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge said’ (Luke 18:1–6).

In this parable, the judge who did not fear God nor regard man is clearly someone who operates by principles other than God's. The parable says that he did not fear God nor regard man. In this context, the word *fear* means to respect or be in awe of, and it means that the unjust judge does not recognize God or His law and principles.

Satan's law is arbitrary and dependent on his own will, and is independent

from the law of God. As seen in the previous chapter, Lucifer was perfect in his ways, until iniquity was found in his heart. The law that he devised is therefore iniquity. The word *iniquity* is the same word as *lawlessness*. Therefore Satan's law is by definition lawlessness. The law of *good and evil* is the law of lawlessness. In other words, it is a law that is contrary and independent of God's law of *agape* love.

The power behind Satan's principle lies in the fact that it is mandatory, arbitrary, inflexible and executable at the prerogative of Satan. Furthermore, in this principle of *good and evil* both *good* and *evil* are unquestionably evil.

Satan's Law Keeps The Human Race In Bondage

In the following exchange with the Pharisees, Jesus refers to the subjects of Satan's law as being in bondage. He makes a sharp comparison between the bondage of Satan's rule, and the freedom of His own law of love:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free (John 8:31-33)'?"

It is interesting to note that by saying that they had never been in bondage to anyone, Jesus' interlocutors denied their bondage in Egypt, the Passover, the Exodus and thus virtually their whole history! But Jesus' remark had a spiritual meaning to which they were blind as well.

Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but

a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father (John 8:34-38).

But now you seek to kill me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father (John 8:40-41).

Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 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 liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God" (John 8:43-47).

The sole proof Jesus gave His hearers in order for them to identify their true father was the fact that they wanted to kill Him. The principle of murder in their hearts unequivocally placed them as followers of Satan, for it is in his law of *good and evil* that murder and death was born. This insight from Jesus Christ also applies across the board to all of humanity.

In this exchange, Jesus is saying that His hearers are in bondage to the deeds of their father, Satan. Because they use his death principle, they seek to kill Jesus. Those who are in subjection to Satan's law are referred to as being in slavery, or in bondage. This bondage is a bondage to the reign of death. Satan's arbitrary law is the death principle and will culminate in the death of all of his subjects.

Good And Evil Is Antithetical To Agape Love

God had informed Adam and Eve that *the tree of knowledge of good and evil* represented Satan's principle. It is Satan who uses this principle to arbitrarily reward good works and arbitrarily punish evil works. This principle is absolutely antithetical to God's principle of *agape* love, which was represented by the *tree of life* in the Garden of Eden. God does not and cannot arbitrarily reward and arbitrarily punish anyone for his works because His very essence is *agape* love, which is unconditional and self-sacrificing. He loves all His creatures unconditionally, whatever state they are in, whether they are good or evil.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven, for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:43-45).

The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145:9).

The above passages tell us that God blesses those who curse Him and does good to those who hate Him. The nature of God's unconditional love is extremely foreign to our minds because we are born with a carnal nature that is saturated in the principle of *good and evil*, a principle in which we are arbitrarily rewarded and punished according to our actions and behavior all the days of our lives.

Good And Evil Is Conditional

It is important to understand that Satan's law is antithetical to the innermost core of God's unconditional love. God's inherently unconditional love was the foundational cause for Satan's opposition to God. Lucifer was defiantly determined that love must be conditional. Thus, his type of love is a counterfeit to *agape* love, and it changes as conditions and circumstances demand. The principle of *good and evil* can never be unconditional. Satan's law is a mixture of *good* and *evil*, and it is an attempt to mix light with darkness, love with conditions. As a result, his propositions are in direct opposition to God's principles of *agape* love, which is unconditional.

Works Of Any Kind Have No Weight Or Influence In God's Love And Grace Toward Us

The following verses taken from the apostle Paul's writings clearly and indisputably demonstrate that neither positive nor negative works, actions or behavior have any influence in God's grace toward us:

*But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all , 'If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of the Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, **knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh will be justified** (Galatians 2:14-16; emphasis added).*

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man

appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7; emphasis added).

One could safely say that the works of the law and the works of righteousness in the above passages refer to so called 'good works' from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Notice that the following passage does not characterize these works either as good or evil, but simply as works:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works**, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9; emphasis added).*

The following passage however, says that it was through evil works that we were once alienated **in our minds**:

*And you, who were once alienated and enemies **in your mind by wicked works**, yet now **He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death**, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight - **if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast**, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister (Colossians 1:21-23; emphasis added).*

Here we may reach a bold conclusion: that if man is not justified by the works

of the law, then whether man is producing evil works without the law, or whether man is keeping the law in order to obtain justification, man is still in the same condition of producing evil works, for by the works of the law no flesh will be justified. Then all man's works, in and of themselves, are evil and lead to death. The Bible portrays such works as filthy rags.

Again, the following passage makes it obvious that through no kind of works at all are we to find peace with God:

*...God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has **abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel** (2 Timothy 1:9,10; emphasis added).*

God has now, by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, shown us that He has abolished death through the revelation of His *agape* love, manifested through Jesus Christ, through whom we know we have unconditional acceptance with God regardless of our works. The positive and negative motivational factors used in the principle of *the knowledge of good and evil* are arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment. The employment of arbitrary reward and punishment in order to shape human behavior and determine human value and worth is the distinguishing factor between Satan's and God's principles.

Arbitrary Reward

In Satan's principle of *good and evil*, good actions must be arbitrarily rewarded with the maximum of exposure so that people will continue to choose to do good. The doer of good works is not only honored with arbitrary reward but with arbitrary recognition, and arbitrary acceptance. When good is performed,

the entire world applauds such magnanimity. Jesus, on the other hand, told us to do our good actions in secret, not seeking worldly recognition. Under the principle of *good and evil*, the motivations for doing good are immaterial, as long as the end result is achieved. 'The end justifies the means,' and arbitrary rewards and punishments are the means by which results are achieved. Therefore, the main emphasis in Satan's rule of law involves performance and is works oriented.

There is love involved in the good works of the principle of *good and evil*, but it is a human love which springs from the egocentric, self-oriented human heart. The selfish human modus operandi strives for recognition and applause and will go to great lengths to satisfy its need to rise and distinguish itself above others. It is always judging its position in the ladder of success at the cost of others, and it will reach higher and higher at the expense of others. It may mask its selfishness by good works in order to hide its true ambition, but it nevertheless remains self-oriented. That is the human heart, and there is no escaping it outside of Jesus Christ.

Arbitrary Punishment

The other motivational factor in the principle of *good and evil* is the use of punishment in order to elicit or shape good behavior, and all punishment methods are by definition violent, from the subtle to the overt. In Lucifer's new rule of law, arbitrary punishment was a pre-requisite. In fact, it was over the issue of arbitrary punishment that he introduced his rule of law in the universe, and this was the foundational issue for his rebellion against God. He claimed that the Achilles' heel in God's law of *agape* love for the governance of the universe was its lack of arbitrary punishment. He claimed and predicted that without arbitrary punishment, God's rule of law was doomed for failure. Since there was no inherent punishment in *agape* love, Lucifer himself had the freedom to introduce his law without having to fear punishment or destruction from God. What he did not accept however, even after God had warned him, is that unavoidable and unstoppable punishment and destruction would occur

from within his own violent system.

In Satan's law of *good and evil*, when evil is perpetrated, it is arbitrarily condemned and punished by the use of verbal or physical violence, ostracism or the imposition of penalties, to name just a few. There are all sorts of negative corrective methods he uses to bring about behavioral change in the subjects at hand. No matter what form these punishments take, they are all violent. The use of physical violence as a mode of punishment is the most visible form of violence, death being the most drastic. Subtler forms of violence may not appear to be violent but are just as damaging and lethal. They may take the form of rejection, the silent treatment, backbiting, gossip, character assassination, lying, stealing, emotional and psychological abuse, etc, with various gradations and combinations of the preceding. When we stop using the principle of *good and evil* and start using God's unconditional love principle, all the physical, psychological and emotional violence we inflict on others will cease to take place. Instead, their well-being becomes our main concern, and we take responsibility for their welfare even at the expense of our own. That is what Jesus Christ has shown by His own example.

Judging One Another Is The Preliminary Step In The Process Of Arbitrary Reward And Punishment

Once Lucifer discarded the unconditional nature of God's law of *agape* love, he automatically instituted a system of judging man's actions and motives. In Satan's law of *good and evil*, one's culpability or merit must be established before punishment or reward can be meted out. This process of ascertaining and determining one's guilt or innocence can be done only through weighing people's behavior on the balances of *good and evil*. One side of the balance weighs good; the other side weighs evil. Whichever side leans heavier determines the outcome of the judgment. In Jesus' words, this is the judgment according to the flesh:

You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me (John 8:15-16).

Righteous Judgment

When Jesus said, *you judge after the flesh* He meant that those to whom He was speaking used the principle of *good and evil* as their measuring rod.

By contrast, when Jesus said that He judges no one, He was saying He judges no one according to their actions in order to either arbitrarily reward them or punish them. The type of judgment Jesus uses is the true judgment, a godly judgment, which He called righteous judgment, and which must not be confused with the judgment that is inherent in the principle of *good and evil*:

*Do not judge according to appearance, **but judge with righteous judgment** (John 7:24; emphasis added).*

*Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the **righteous Judge**, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8; emphasis added).*

God's righteous judgment is always based on His law of unconditional love and is not a judgment that revolves around human behavior.

Notice in the previous verse that the righteous Judge gives the crown of life to Paul and *to all those who love His appearing at that Day*. Those who love His appearing are those who died in the hope of the resurrection at the second coming, and those who will be alive on that Day. They have accepted the gift of life freely given to all because they believed the testimony of Jesus regarding

the Father's unconditional acceptance of each one of us.

When the Bible says that we will be judged by our works, it must be understood that works are the only visible evidence of what we believe inwardly. Therefore, by our actions it will become evident whether we have believed what Jesus Christ has told us regarding God's unconditional love, or whether we have remained in bondage to the principles of Satan's arbitrary law of *good and evil*.

God cannot judge in the human sense, after the flesh, and love unconditionally at the same time. The judgment that Jesus referred to as *My judgment is true* when He said, "*You judge after the flesh; I judge no one; and yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me,*" (John 8:15, 16), is a judgment based on *agape* love, not on *good and evil*.

The Ultimate Judgment Is The Reception Or Rejection Of Jesus' Revelation Of God's Love

Jesus Christ is the gift God gave to the world to reveal God's non-judging and non-judgmental character. According to the Jewish law, by the mouth of two witnesses was anything established as true, and by His and the Father's witness was this gift of the revelation of the character of God established as true.

If there is anything negative at all in regards to biblical judgment, as far as Jesus Christ and the Father are concerned, it has to do with our reaction to, and acceptance of the gift we have been given. We have the freedom of choice to either accept or reject Jesus' testimony, and this will be our judgment. This judgment involves the acceptance or rejection of His principle of love. Jesus' judgment is put in effect through the giving of the light He came to shed on the character of God, and is therefore the result of the witness He gave regarding His Father's principles:

And if any one hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him;

for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (John 12:47–50).

The apostle John confirms that judgment has to do with our acceptance or rejection of Jesus:

That was the true light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:9–13).

Judgment After The Flesh Is Explained In The Sermon On The Mount

Jesus' warning against the use of judgment after the flesh refers to our weighing one another's worth through satanic judgment, and is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Below are both Matthew's and Luke's versions:

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured

back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:1-5).

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you (Luke 6:37).

The plank that is in our eye is the fact that we are using Satan's principle of *good and evil* rather than God's unconditional love.

The Apostle Paul Warns Us Not To Judge

Further warnings to let go of the judgment involved in Satan's principle of *good and evil* is found throughout the apostle Paul's epistles:

Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:3-4).

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,

and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way (Romans 14:10–13).

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God (1 Corinthians 4:3–5).

The only hope of humanity is to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, for with Him there is no condemnation and all are absolved. Paul says that in fact he does not even judge himself, and God is able to make him and all stand through His *agape* love.

He Who Judges According To Good And Evil Judges The Law Of Agape Love

James goes as far as to pronounce that he who judges after the flesh, that is, judges and speaks against his brother, judges the Law. How does he judge the Law and which Law does he judge? He judges God’s Law of unconditional love, and is in effect rejecting it in preference to Satan’s law of *good and evil*. And by rejecting God’s law of unconditional love, he is rejecting God Himself.

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There

is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? (James 4:11-12).

There is one Lawgiver. God, the Creator of heaven and earth, has only one ultimate supreme law, and that is *agape* love. He saves and destroys by giving us the ultimate freedom to choose either Him or Satan. Inherent in the choice we make is either destruction or salvation. Judging one another puts us clearly in Satan's domain.

The Significance Of The Tribe Of Dan And The Hundred And Forty Four Thousand

The weight of this matter can be realized by a close look at the tribes that make up the hundred and forty-four thousand spoken of in Revelation chapter 7. The tribes numbered here are Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, **Manasseh**, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. Comparing these names to the original twelve sons of Jacob, we can see that these were: *Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, **Dan**, Naphtali, Gad and Asher (Genesis 35:23; emphasis added).*

Only eleven of the original names are listed in the hundred and forty-four thousand. The twelfth name listed as a part of the number in Revelation is Manasseh, who was not a son of Jacob, but of Joseph:

And after these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees til we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. And I

*heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousands of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; **of the tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand were sealed**; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed (Revelation 7:1-8; emphasis added).*

Manasseh, Joseph's son, replaced Jacob's son, Dan. Dan is not mentioned as one of those who will be sealed with the seal of God as spoken of in Revelation 7. Why is Dan not included in this number? The answer might be found in Jacob's final blessing on the brothers just prior to his death:

Dan shall judge his people As one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward. I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD (Genesis 49:16-17)!

By judging his people Dan placed himself outside of the reach of God's law of unconditional love, and he unfitted himself to be sealed with the character of God. He became as the *serpent by the way, an adder in the path, an accuser* much like the old serpent called the Devil:

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil

*and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down** (Revelation 12:9–10; emphasis added).*

Dan, the judge of his people, is reminiscent of Satan, the accuser of our brothers; he bites the horse’s heel, so that its rider shall fall backward. Dan becomes a stumbling block to his people and makes them fall backward, away from the true knowledge of God. Therefore, like his father the Devil, and by his own choice, he is cast down from the fellowship of his people.

The last words in Jacob’s blessing are puzzling to say the least. It appears that he is almost sighing with pain for the spirit that is in his son. What does he mean when he says *I have waited for Your salvation, O Jehovah?* Is Jacob looking forward to the time when God’s righteousness will be fully revealed by the promised Messiah, in whom there is no condemnation or accusation at all toward the human race?

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1–2).

Satan Imposes Order By Controlling Behavior Through Good And Evil

We naively tend to think that Satan is interested only in causing harm, death, destruction and evil, which indeed is the ultimate, true outcome of his principle. But few of us realize that Satan introduced the principle of *good and evil* in an actual attempt to create order and produce good behavior as well. Most of us fail to understand that the reason Satan devised his own law in the universe was to implement a new universal order for governance, a new world order, so to speak. That is why in order to promote good behavior and curb and control evil, Satan uses arbitrary rewards and punishment.

The reasoning behind his principle is based on the premise that people will choose to do good in order to avoid the punishment they would receive if they did evil. This way of thinking was based on the erroneous notion, which human logic has come to accept, that the more rewards there are in place for doing good, the less evil will prevail; but if that doesn't work, then the more heinous the evil, the more drastic the punishment needs to be in order to bring about good behavior. Satan believed that his method of bringing about a model society was better than God's; therefore he promoted this system of *good and evil* in which he uses a system of arbitrary rewards and punishments to curb and control evil.

Arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment are innate only to Satan's domain of *good and evil*. People will choose to do good because it is a better alternative than the punishment that is received for doing evil. This is efficacious to a certain extent, in particular because the more heinous the evil the more drastic the punishment. He also deals with rewards because the more rewards that are in place for doing good, the less evil will be perpetrated.

Since Adam and Eve followed Satan by eating from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, the whole world operates by his principle, from the lowest level of personal relationships to the highest level of government.

Punishment Is Used In Child Rearing

The common saying that many parents use, ‘spare the rod and spoil the child,’ is based on the following verses from the Book of Proverbs:

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly (Proverbs 13:24).

Unfortunately, most parents have misunderstood what the rod means. Consequently, they use various forms of physical punishment to discipline their children in an effort to force them towards good behavior. A better and proper understanding of the rod is that it was used as an instrument by the good shepherd to guide the sheep, but not to hurt them in any way. The rod here referred to is the same rod spoken of in Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:26–27, 12:3–5. In each of these passages the *rod of iron* refers to the unbreakable nature of God’s eternal law of love as revealed by Jesus Christ:

*You shall break them with a **rod of iron**; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel (Psalm 2:9; emphasis added).*

*And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – He shall rule them with a **rod of iron**; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels – as I also have received from My Father, and I will give him the morning star (Revelation 2:26–27; emphasis added).*

Notice in the above verses that Jesus will give power over the nations to those who overcome the principle of *good and evil*, and they shall rule together with Him, by the law of *agape* love.

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne (Revelation 12:3-5; emphasis added).

The fiery dragon drew a third of the stars of heaven into the principle of *good and evil* and threw them to the earth, where Adam and Eve also adopted his system. But the male Child, Jesus Christ, came to the rescue of His earthly children and gave His life so that the love of God may be perceived.

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with **a rod of iron**. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:11-16).*

Jesus Christ, the *Faithful and True*, *The Word of God*, makes war in righteousness, which is to say, not with *good and evil* but with *agape* love. The sharp sword that goes out of His mouth is the truth about God's character, with which He should strike the nations. Jesus Christ struck the nations at the cross, where we may observe the ultimate revelation of the love of God. It is by the service

of the heart that God elicits obedience, and not by the use of violence. Thus, love is the strongest of all powers and will last when all things fail. Its strength even goes beyond the grave:

Set me a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love is as strong as death (Song of Solomon 8:6).

The Worldly Meaning Of The Rod

The laws of not only our country but of the whole world have gravitated towards the principle of *good and evil*, and why not, as it is so logical to the human mind. To prevent the escalation of crime, our zero tolerance laws mete out severe punishment in an effort to nip wrong actions in the bud. The greatest example of this is capital punishment, the ultimate deterrent. But there is empirical evidence already in existence to prove that this system is a failure.

What is seen in the actions of humanity is proof that Satan's principle of *good and evil* is not working. Most of our evil actions are done in secrecy, and if all of these were made known and publicized, we would have the overwhelming proof that Satan's system has failed. All one needs to do is follow the news to realize this! In spite of its deterrents, the system of *good and evil* still fails to prevent evil from taking place in the world; people are still breaking the law all the while hoping they will not get caught. Every time we use violence against a child, we are teaching that child to be violent. In fact, instead of stifling evil, this system promotes it, and violence begets violence. This is enough evidence that this system is not from God.

Good and evil Is One Principle, Not Two

We have seen that *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represents Satan's principle and character, and *the tree of life* represents God's principle and character. By representing Satan's principle by one tree, God showed even in the garden that this principle of *good and evil* is not two separate principles but one coalesced principle of two seemingly opposed concepts. Within this system, both good and evil are one and the same principle, and both are completely evil. It is an illusion, a deception that *good and evil* are two antithetical principles.

We must remember that Satan was able to convince one third of the angels of the value of his principle, and they were brilliant beings; so we are dealing with something that is extremely seductive and convincing. But God made it easy for us, by showing us that one tree represents God's character and the other tree represents Satan's character. It is that simple. One tree represents God's method for governing and the other tree represents that of Satan. The coalesced principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* is antithetical in every way to God's unitary principle expressed by *the tree of life*. Plainly stated, one is the source of life and the other is the source of death; one is God's, the other is Satan's.

Good and evil is therefore the singular governing principle devised by Satan. It is a hybrid principle, and it was the iniquity that arose in Lucifer's heart.

The Good Of Good And Evil Is Also Evil

The human race has been deceived into believing that the two words *good* and *evil* in Satan's principle of *good and evil* are opposed to each other: that *good* is good, and *evil* is evil. We have divided *good and evil*, this single, coalesced, depraved, principle of Satan, and made it into two antithetical principles, good versus evil, when in reality *good and evil* is one single principle. *Good and evil* in this context are two sides of the same coin, and the coin is the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. As God's antagonist, Satan and anything

promulgated by him are totally other and apart from God and His principle of *agape* love. Therefore in God's spiritual reality, and from a biblical perspective, this good is as immoral and evil as Satan is, in comparison to God.

Though superficially they appear to be opposites, intrinsically, both the good and the evil in Satan's principle eventuate in destruction and death. When used in the context of *good and evil*, they are a unitary principle, and they both result in death.

There Is No Freedom Of Choice In Satan's Principle Of Good And Evil

Because God grants freedom of choice to all His intelligent beings, they can either choose for or against Him. Without this freedom, Satan himself would not have had the opportunity to introduce the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* in the universe.

Satan also claims that there is freedom of choice in his principle of *good and evil* or else he would not have proposed or instituted it. However, if Satan had absolute authority, he would have had autocratic control over which form of government would prevail in the universe. The only rule of law, the only principle that would have been allowed to prevail or be in existence would have been that which *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represents. It must be emphasized that Satan would never allow any alternative principles to exist alongside his principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The principle of *good and evil* does not allow choice or offer it. Inherent in his principle there is no possibility for any alternative choice to be made. Factually, therefore, Satan's principle allows no freedom at all, for there is no available freedom of choice within his principle. That is why the Bible characterizes Satan's kingdom as slavery, and the slavery the children of Israel experienced in Egypt is a type of the slavery involved in Satan's principle. The antitype is the principle of *good and evil*. Since Adam and Eve partook of this principle, humanity has been held slave to it. Only Jesus Christ can free us from Satan's principle of *good and evil* and leads us to Canaan, the land flowing with milk

and honey, a symbol of where *agape* love reigns. As Satan's principle of *good and evil* is broadly symbolized by the slavery in Egypt, and more specifically by slavery to our carnal natures, to which we are all shackled at birth, Jesus promises us that as we embrace the truth about God's character, we will be free indeed.

Good And Evil Does Not Offer Choice Because It Culminates In Death

Even though *good and evil* appear to represent two different concepts, one good and the other evil, and thus seem to convey the idea that a choice exists within the principle itself, the apparent choice between the two of them is a spiritual delusion. Choice is nonexistent in Satan's principle since both its good and its evil culminate in death.

But how can destruction and death result from good? How can chaos eventuate from good? For the single reason that in teaming up with evil, this good is not true good at all. The good that is present in the principle of good and evil is antithetical to the very essence of God's *agape* love. This good is as antagonistic and opposed, as incompatible and irreconcilable as evil is incompatible and irreconcilable to God's *agape* love. Since *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represents Satan's principle, this particular good in his system of governance is also evil and will ultimately culminate in death because God said it would.

Freedom of choice is only a deceptive delusion in Satan's principle because, as already discussed, we have been deceived into believing that the good and the evil of *good and evil* are two opposing, separate principles. Those who are cognizant of this deception know for a fact that there is an outright lie in the misrepresentation that there is freedom of choice in Satan's principle. His principle itself guarantees that there will never be any alternative principle available to choose from, because that intent is resolutely and inherently established in his principle.

The Good Of Good And Evil Is Evil Because It Is Egocentric

Why is the *good* in Satan's principle evil? Because inherent in this *good* is the direct opposite of God's essence and nature of *agape* love. This *good* is egocentric for it seeks the best results for itself. This *good* seeks to maximize the benefits that are acquired for oneself. Under this *good* the end will justify the means in order to reap the maximum self-fulfillment and self-gratification. This *good* is the ultimate form of selfishness, where the primary motivation for one's actions will be the maximum arbitrary reward that one can acquire. This *good* might not do any overt harm to anyone else, but if push came to shove, it would seek its own protection when confronted with danger. One may ask, if this *good* is part and parcel of evil, why would it fear confrontation with evil? The answer is found in the fact that fear is intrinsic to the principle of *good and evil*, and it permeates all the *good* and the *evil* in that domain.

The World Believes That The Good Of Good And Evil Belongs To God

The whole world has gone wrong in that it has accepted Satan's principle of governance. Even though Satan became the ruler of this world after Adam and Eve sinned, the world still has the same original choice that Adam and Eve had before they sinned. But worse still, all religions of the world have accepted this principle as belonging to God. This is where we have all so profoundly erred in believing that the *good* from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* is of God.

It is critical that we grasp that God has no part in the principle of *good and evil*. This knowledge provides the essential paradigm that effectively responds to all the otherwise unanswered questions about the apparent vengeful and wrathful God of the Old Testament. It is also imperative that this is flawlessly comprehended because this understanding has eternal consequences both for

God and for us.

Note judiciously that the *good* in the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* is as much at enmity with the cross principle of *agape* love as is the *evil* in the principle of *good and evil*. The acceptance of the overwhelming inaccuracy that this *good* is of God has culminated in our thinking and living by Satan's principles. With this cognitive dissonance we have also failed in accurately interpreting the Bible. Thus we have attributed the characteristics of Satan to God.

We Go Further And Claim That The Evil Of Good And Evil Is Of God

We have actually gone even one step further and taken the *evil* of Satan's death principle of *good and evil* and claim that it too, belongs to God! Thus not only has *good and evil's good* become the principle of God because He arbitrarily rewards us for doing good, but *evil*, the principle of punishment, and even death, is from God! How we have played into Satan's hands! The reality is that both the *good* and the *evil* of Satan's death principle make up one single evil principle, in which God has no part whatsoever.

Now, The World Believes That The Entire Principle Of Good And Evil Is Of God

The preponderance of believers in God, whether monotheistic or polytheistic, attribute to Him the principle of arbitrary reward and punishment. They think that when they obey God's laws that command their compliance, their positive behavior moves God to respond in favorable ways towards them. Having found favor with God by their positive behavior, they think they will be accepted and rewarded. Arbitrary acceptance and reward are then given to them by Satan and are exhibited in multitudinous favorable and positive ways.

All religions, consciously or unconsciously, have accepted the rule of law of

good and evil as emanating from God. They propagate that God has instituted arbitrary rewards for doing good and arbitrary punishments for doing evil; it is taught that this is inherent in His love. Once this so called love becomes the accepted norm and we accept it as God's love, we succeed in indubitably changing His love into a mutable, conditional, self-centered love that ceases to be divine *agape* love.

All of earth's religious systems, including Christianity itself, espouse the same view that it is God who arbitrarily rewards and punishes. This belief, anchored in Satan's principle of *good and evil*, proposes that if you do good God will shower you with blessings, and if you do evil He will punish you.

Punishment is an inalienable component of Satan's principle, which the Christian community insists is God's righteous, wrathful anger towards sinners who persist in sin and evil. In fact, it is taught that punishment is a much-needed component of His love and is a part of the righteousness of God.

This view proposes that offenders will suffer retribution and punishment from God when His laws and commands are disobeyed. And if they persist in blatant disobedience, they will precipitate His wrathful anger and rejection, and eventually they will suffer violent, brutal death at God's hands for being violators of His laws. Natural disasters, claimed to be Acts of God, are one example of such so-called retributive punishments from God towards the rebellious and evil. It is immaterial that in the process of the terrible destruction of the wicked, there are also some good people who happen to be in the path of destruction and who, therefore, also suffer.

Good And Evil Has Replaced Agape Love

Again, you may ask, how can the *good* in the principle of *good and evil* be a principle of death? Simply presented, God decreed it when He stated, *of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

It cannot be overstated that the *good* and the *evil* in this principle are both of Satan and should not be divided to portray the *good* as of God and the *evil* as

of Satan. That is the reason why it is the principle of death, and the opposite to *the tree of life* principle.

The natural human mind cannot conceive how it is possible for the *good* in this system of *good and evil* not to be of God. It is even more puzzling for us to think that any form of *good* can be of Satan. It appears the epitome of insanity, irrationality and absurdity to propose that any form of arbitrary good does not come from God, but even worse, that some form of good can come from Satan. It may appear the height of blasphemy to make such claims. But the *good* in the principle of *good and evil* is antithetical to God's *agape* love, and is opposite to the true 'goodness' of God.

Now behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good teacher, what good shall I do that I may have eternal life?' So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is God. But if you want to enter life, keep the commandments (Matthew 19:16, 17).'

When addressed as *Good teacher* by the rich young ruler, Jesus' reply makes exactly this point: *why do you call me good? There is no one good but God.* The young ruler's address to Jesus, *Good teacher*, was done with a mind governed by the principle of *good and evil* (he wanted to know what *good* works would be worthy of the reward of eternal life). The reply Jesus gave appears to indicate that He is claiming not to be good. Now we know that this is not the case, for Jesus was good and He was Divine. So what is Jesus trying to say here? Jesus was separating the good that is in God from the good that is in the principle of *good and evil* – *why do you call me good?* Having done that, He then stated there is no one good but God. All the good that is in the world is only a counterfeit, a deception, for it is flawed by selfish motives and agendas. Only God's *agape* love, that good that Jesus referred to when He said *there is no one good but God*, stands as truly good. The cross is the great demonstration of the good that is of God.

By Misunderstanding Good And Evil We Have Completely Ignored Agape Love

The overwhelmingly significant error of dividing Satan's principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* into two separate principles, as one proceeding from God, the other from Satan, has caused us to completely leave out and even forget the principle from *the tree of life*. The acceptance of this bifurcation of the principle of *good and evil* has darkened our minds to God's principle of *agape*. When this mindset is ingrained in us, it causes us to regard the tree of *good and evil* as containing two diametrically opposed principles and completely takes our focus off the principle from the *tree of life*.

When *the tree of life* principle is no longer the core of our cognitive endeavor, there will be no other alternative but to believe and live by Satan's principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Thus we are cleverly kept in bondage to the principle of *good and evil*, within which there is no freedom of choice.

Belief In A God Of Reward And Punishment Elicits Selfish Response

When we believe that God arbitrarily rewards and punishes us according to our works, our responses towards Him will be generated purely from selfish motives. Those who are obedient to God's laws and commands under such motivations are compliant either because they desire the arbitrary rewards they are offered, or because they wish to avert the negative results of punishment. Those who live in erratic or persistent disobedience to God's laws and commands dread the arbitrary penalization that they believe God will inflict on them. Thus they live in fear of God. So it is out of fear of arbitrary punishment that they attempt to obey God's law to the best of their ability.

Both reasons for obedience, one for arbitrary reward and the other for fear of arbitrary punishment, are anchored on selfish motives. This is the outcome of Satan's principle. The adherents of such a God are incapable of responding to

Him with the purity of *agape* love. They will find it impossible to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Such a God can never be obeyed without a selfish motive, and even though His believers might claim otherwise, they cannot respond to this kind of God in a loving way. It is humanly impossible to respond with *agape* love to anyone who commands respect and obedience through even an infinitesimal amount of fear or violence. The response to a God who uses the principle of *good and evil* will always be tainted with fear and self-centeredness.

The True Motivation For Obeying God Is His Agape Love

Speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus said that God was looking for worshipers who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. Jesus claimed to have this knowledge when He informed her that He was the Messiah that was to come: I who speak to you am He.

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He’ (John 4:23–26).

What does it mean to worship God *in spirit and in truth*? Can we worship the Father in spirit and in truth when we have a false knowledge of His character? The words in truth point us to the truth about His character and Jesus, the Messiah who came, did tell us all things about the Father’s character of *agape* love. Only when we worship the God of *agape* love do we worship Him in spirit and truth. According to Jesus, *the Father is seeking such to worship Him*.

Christians Obey God In Order To Receive Reward Or Avoid Punishment

Most of us would agree that believing in God and living by his principles are good pursuits in life. Can anything be more rewarding and fulfilling than having such objectives in mind? After all, salvation, the end result of such quests, is what everyone is aiming for. After death, we all look forward to the reward of a blissful life spent eternally with God. The beneficiary has performed the stipulated requirements to receive this magnanimous arbitrary reward from God; the requirements are fulfilled, and the gift is given. The Benevolent Benefactor and the beneficiary are both very happy. Unfortunately this is a false picture of God's salvation.

What could possibly be so wrong with receiving the gift of eternal life when the beneficiary meets the requirements? In this scenario, the maximum benefit the beneficiary receives for believing and obeying God is an endless gratification of self. The Benevolent Benefactor, the God of the gift, was the means by which the end-result was attained. Compliance with all the requirements and stipulations in this formal covenant-contract arrangement was enacted purely in order to receive the promised gift. Believing a certain way and following the stipulated conditions would reap the ultimate benefit of heaven. The *good* in this academic alliance was dead to any *agape* love relationship between the recipient of the gift and the Benevolent Benefactor. The arbitrary reward to be received from God was the motivation for complying with the requirement.

God's attitude, however, does not change towards the beneficiary despite the selfish reason behind their compliance to attain the desired reward. This selfish motivation has not impacted or altered God's attitude even in the least way towards the beneficiary of His gift, and that is the case purely because He is *agape* love.

Some Obey Out Of Fear

Another, and much more damaging reason for obedience, is fear – fear that God in anger will arbitrarily and capriciously punish the offender. Such a reason for obedience could also be classed as legalism. But it is this response to God that the Christian world calls *agape* love. This form of obedience is the accepted selfish reason for compliance to God's requirements, but this is not the divine way in which God desires to be followed.

The Path Of Blessings Is In Agape Love

Having said that God does not arbitrarily reward or punish, it cannot be denied however, that when we live by God's principles, rewards and blessings do follow from His domain. The boundaries are delineated and presented for the path of blessings. Intrinsic in the choice to follow God's path are found rewards and blessings. It must be understood that these are not arbitrary acts of recompense from an arbitrary and capricious God. One does not live by God's principle in order to receive rewards and blessings. One lives by His principle after being moved by God's *agape* love; it is in response to this great love that one embraces God's counsels for living.

God Is Not Interested In Behavior But In Unconditional Love Relationships

God knows that the only thing that will change human behavior is a change of heart. A change of heart comes only from understanding and experiencing the love of God firsthand and by adopting His principle of *agape* love. Then the heart will be imbued with the principle of unconditional love that comes only from God Himself.

Jesus taught us that if we love Him and all that He represents, we are to love one another as well as our enemies, for these are His commandments. If we

have the principle of unconditional love in our hearts, we will be in harmony with Him and the Father, and will have the same mind as they. He gave us this understanding when He said:

If you love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15).

If you keep my commandments you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love (John 15:10).

You shall abide in God's *agape* love if you obey God's directive to love one another unconditionally, with *agape*, including enemies. Jesus kept His Father's commandment to live by *agape*, therefore He abode in God's *agape* love. By living by His principle we are in harmony with Him. There is no force or coercion in the above directives; they allow complete freedom of choice and show complete respect for the individual. There is no threat of punishment or promise of reward. Jesus draws us to Himself by love and by love only.

Jesus is the only answer to a failing world, because only Jesus has shown us His infinite love that reaches all regardless of merit. If we have tasted this great love of the Father and Son toward us, we are to be a light to the world and an extension of His arm, loving everyone unconditionally so that they may experience the love of God through us. It is through us that God wants to reach everyone with His *agape* love, which is the only alternative to the principle of *good and evil*.

Even Desiring Heaven Can Be Motivated By Selfishness – Reward

The followers of a dual personality, capricious, arbitrary, hybrid God will strive to implement in their lives what He has stipulated and classified as good behavior in order to earn His favor and be rewarded accordingly. They will promote all sorts of meritorious deeds deserving of reward, and reward will be the most persuasive inducement to act favorably towards God, thus playing a significant part in our relationship with Him.

Most followers of God, including Christians, would agree that there is no greater reward that can possibly be earned than spending eternity with Him. This greatest of all rewards in the merit system of arbitrary reward and punishment is often the only motivation for our relationship with God and is based on a very subtle and disguised form of selfishness. Our hearts and lives are left with a gaping chasm in our relationship with God when the foundational reason for our relationship with Him is this arbitrary reward. If this is not selfishness, what else could it be? If the ultimate and foundational reason for our relationship with God is arbitrary reward of eternal life, *agape* love will never be the basis of our relationship, and we will miss out on the most amazing experience in the universe, the experience Jesus prayed we would have with Himself and with God the Father:

*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. **And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.** Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these*

*have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, **that the love with which You loved Me may be in them**, and I in them (John 17:20–26; emphasis added).*

The relationship that God wants to have with us is the same relationship He has with His Son. Can we possibly imagine that? A relationship in which there will be infinite love, that same love that He and Jesus have shared from eternity, from even before the foundation of the world? Eternity with God in heaven is not a reward, but a return to our natural state, a face to face relationship with our God, as it was before evil entered the universe.

The story of the rich young ruler is a perfect example of the fallacy of worshipping a God of reward and punishment. The young ruler had asked Jesus what he could do to inherit eternal life, seeking the reward through his good behavior. However, when offered a close relationship with the Son of God, he turned sadly away. He was not interested in a relationship of love with His Creator; rather, he was motivated by the fear of eternal death, and hoped to do all he could in his own power in order to please God and attain the reward of eternal life.

Hell – Punishment Is Also A Selfish Motivator For Good Works

On the other side of this coin is the belief that if we execute any acts that God has stipulated as evil He will inflict terrible punishment on us. In this scenario it is thought that He will unleash His punishment upon us and consign us to eternal hell fire if we arouse His wrath by behaving in any way that is contrary to His dictates. Thus the fear of retributive punishment prompts us to make sure we possess a saving faith, and so we try to live in obedience to His commands. Abject fear that God will unleash His vengeance upon us for disobedience would be the foundational reason and rationale for compliance to His commands. *Agape* love is again nonexistent in the relationship with this hybrid God because of the fear of punishment.

Good And Evil Is The Works Of The Law

The New Testament confirms something of paramount significance with respect to the principle of *good and evil*. It shows us that the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* involves the works of the law:

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified (Galatians 2:16).

No one who follows the law to receive an arbitrary reward will be justified; justification will come only from believing, by faith, in the everlasting love of God toward us. So we see that Satan's principle of doing good in order to receive an arbitrary reward has no place in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul unequivocally nullified and made void Satan's principle of *good and evil* by the above statement. The law of God is pure and good and eternal; Jesus said:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

But if we keep God's law by the spirit of the principle of *good and evil* it will have no meaning – it will be dead works. The works of the law are works from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and by the works of this law no flesh will be justified. The moral law of God can be obeyed only in the way it should be obeyed if it is by the principle of *agape* love, and it is a free act made from a heart that responds to the constraining love of God.

How we keep the law depends on who teaches us how the moral law of God should be viewed. For instance, the law of God categorically commands *you shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20:16)*. Under Satan's principle of *good and*

evil, the act of committing adultery calls for the arbitrary punishment of death, as stated in the Old Testament:

The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death (Leviticus 20:10).

Jesus Christ nullified and voided this arbitrary punishment of Satan because it stemmed from the principle of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Stoning was the punishment for adultery as mandated in the Old Testament. When the Scribes and Pharisees brought the adulterous woman before Jesus to have her stoned He did not sanction their demand. This is what Jesus said to them:

He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first (John 8:7).

Jesus denied their demand to stone the adulteress woman without overtly creating a problem, and one by one all the accusers left the scene. Using the principle of *agape* love, He did not impute this sin to her. Paul confirms the principle behind this act of Jesus when He says:

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin (Romans 4:7-8).

Those of us who believe and live by the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* have made Satan our spiritual father and teacher.

Since Adam and Eve's choice in the garden, every human being has had either Satan or God as a teacher. Everyone in the world, without exception, is either taught by God's principle represented by *the tree of life* or by Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

Righteousness By Works Is A Part Of Good And Evil

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the principle that is aligned with righteousness by works. Please take heed that both good works and evil works in the principle of *good and evil* are inherent components of righteousness by works. Righteousness by works incorporates both *good* and *evil* works. In righteousness by works the word 'righteousness' is actually unrighteous, because the principle that it reflects is not the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is explained in Romans 3:21-26:

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The righteousness of God justifies all freely; His righteousness is the passing over of our sins, the forgiveness of all our works done under the law of *good and evil*. By believing and accepting the love which Jesus Christ demonstrated to us by His death, that is, in His blood, we may fully benefit from this knowledge

and be reconciled to God.

In the beginning of the book of Hebrews, its author states that Jesus Christ's rule of law is righteousness. His rule of law is not based on the principle of *good and evil* which is iniquity, lawlessness, the principle of arbitrary reward and punishment, righteousness by works. In fact, the verse in question states that He hates iniquity:

But to the Son He [God] says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness [AGAPE] is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness [AGAPE] and hated iniquity [GOOD AND EVIL]; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above your fellows' (Hebrews 1:8–9, emphasis added).

No earthly prophet has rightly understood what the scepter of righteousness means except those who receive their revelation from Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:1–2 states that *God, who at various times and various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these final days spoken by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.* The biblical prophets had an incomplete understanding of the character of God, but Jesus, who was in the bosom of the Father, could reveal Him completely.

All belief-systems that are contradictory to the revelation that Jesus Christ gave of the Father are not based on righteousness. Only Jesus Christ has the correct understanding of God, therefore only He can give it to us. Thus the verse says, *Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.*

John further clarifies righteousness:

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from

the beginning, that we should love one another (1 John 3:10, 11).

Righteousness is *agape* love toward one another, unconditional, forgiving up to seventy times seven, that is, completely, infinitely.

Most Christians have accepted that righteousness by works is a principle that belongs to Satan and not to God. But they inadvertently fall into believing that righteousness by works is of God when they believe that God arbitrarily rewards good works and punishes evil works. If righteousness by faith is true, and it is, then from God's side, neither the positive nor the negative works of the law impact God's attitude and behavior towards us. God is immutable, He is *agape* love, and we know that in God's principle, as represented by *the tree of life*, no form of works alters God's attitude towards people.

Righteousness by works is not righteousness at all in its spiritual application. Righteousness by works is not of God for the simple reason that it negates what God, in Jesus Christ, demonstrated on the cross when Jesus died for the sins of the human race. The anti-God theology of righteousness by works promotes the belief that good works are arbitrarily rewarded with salvation and evil works are arbitrarily punished by God. And when such evil activities are pursued continuously, the ultimate punishment from God will be eternal torment. This is the principle that is innate in the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This iniquity, this lawlessness, is the opposite of God's righteousness as demonstrated on the cross.

The ultimate purpose of Satan's system of righteousness by works is to teach us to be good through this reward/punishment mechanism, but it abysmally fails in achieving that purpose.

'The End Justifies The Means' And 'Survival Of The Fittest' Are From Good And Evil

Satan is the originator of that way of thinking in which 'the end justifies the means.' To him it does not matter what methodology is utilized to achieve his agenda as long as it is achieved. If allowed, he would prefer to have exclusive dictatorial sovereignty and control over everyone in order to achieve his end, thus taking away our freedom of choice.

Fortunately, God has not allowed him to have this despotic, dictatorial power over us because He gave us Jesus Christ. Jesus has given us another option, and in a sense, only as we understand His principle can we now have freedom of choice. We are now free to choose to follow and obey either God or Satan and to choose who will have power in our lives. Aside from Jesus, our only option is the principle of *good and evil* and that is why Jesus is the ultimate revelation for the world to know God.

If it were possible, Satan would have destroyed God without a second thought so that he would have no opposition and become the one and only monarch of the universe. At this point the reader may ask how we can make such bold statements. In Satan's mode of thinking, and inherent in his principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, there is room for only one at the top. There is only one winner in the struggle for the survival of the fittest, and whatever means are employed to get there are justified:

*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 (Isaiah 14:13-14).*

Jesus, on the other hand, is moved by an altogether different principle:

[JESUS CHRIST] who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:6–8; emphasis added).

In Jesus we see a spirit that is even willing to share His throne with humanity:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne (Revelation 3:21).

Without Agape Love All Of Us Default Into Good And Evil

Satan incessantly advocates, and coercively promotes, the principles represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* to each one of us. He, and those who utilize his principle, are addressed by Jesus thus:

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy (John 10:10a).

The antithesis to Satan's work and to all those who live by his principle is shown by Jesus' statement that:

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10: 10b).

All who have failed to understand God's love as it was vividly demonstrated on the cross, are imbued with Satan's principles in their thinking and actions. The God of the Bible is *agape* love. This *agape* love is His essence, His law. By His immutable love He governs the entire universe. The revelation of this love was manifested on the cross.

Agape love is constant and is not controlled by changing circumstances. *Agape* love does not arbitrarily reward those who obey God's commandments. Its rewards are inherent and intrinsic in God's commands. Nor does this *agape* love arbitrarily punish those who do evil by disobeying God's commandments; God does not use disease, destruction and death to punish the human race, for we are His beloved children.

When we choose to disobey God's law of *agape* love, we automatically choose to obey Satan's law from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and in that domain there is arbitrary punishment. God's *agape* love is not affected by our positive or negative actions because *agape* love is immutable. He only responds with *agape* love, irrespective of the choices that rule our actions. We should take heed to the fact that when we decide against God, we automatically fall under the jurisdiction of Satan's rule of law.

Without *agape* love we all default into living by the principle of *good and evil*. Therefore it is not a surprise that we would even attribute Satan's character traits to God. God Himself told us that we would do so when He said:

...You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God (Psalm 50:21-23; emphasis added).

The last two sentences of this Psalm can be especially frightening if we have not comprehended God's principles of non-violence. But when we understand that God is not a destroyer and we then read with a spiritual mind that is in accord

with God's *agape* love as revealed on the cross, this verse will be understood to mean exactly the opposite of what they seem to say. Paraphrased, it will mean something like this:

'Mark this, you who forget that God has unconditional love for all, lest you think that He will destroy you and then there will be no one that can help and deliver you because, if you think God is against you, who will be for you? Get to know God's true character, so that you may offer only thanksgiving and praise to Him instead of the penance of killing animals thinking that this will appease an angry God. It is the one who knows there is nothing to be afraid in God that honors Him. The one who corrects His understanding about God will also correct his behavior toward his fellow man. To such a one God will show how much He loves him, and what a great salvation He has for him and for the whole human race!'

The phrase *to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God* cannot mean salvation by works, for we have already seen that by the works of the law no one will be saved. The only other possible interpretation is the one offered above. God's ways are higher than ours because His ways are *agape* love:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "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).

We must be very careful that we do not make God into a God that is altogether one like ourselves, that is, into a God who uses the principle of *good and evil*.

Good And Evil Is Self-Destructive But God's Grace Is Holding The Winds Of Destruction

The principle of *good and evil* has been given ample and adequate opportunity to prove itself over our earth's history, but soon it will be demonstrated that innate in this system, in this principle, there is a time bomb that will ultimately culminate in utter disaster and death. Then it will be observed and comprehended that in reality there is no freedom in Satan's principle of *good and evil*. His principle has not imploded in self-destruction with its innate speed due to the grace of God, which permeates the universe. God *makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust*. Until the final decision is made by every member of the human race, whether to believe and live either by God's principle or by Satan's principle, the process of implosion is drastically decelerated. When, with absolute conclusiveness and finality, humanity universally chooses between God's and Satan's government, then Satan's principle will accelerate exponentially and reap its own demise.

Satan Knew What To Attack: The Mind

Satan knew that the mind was the region where the perfect understanding of God's character in Adam and Eve was localized, and a spiritual deathblow must be executed in this region in order for him to achieve his goals. That is why he brought spiritual death to Adam and Eve in connection with their correct knowledge of God. He knew that he first needed to destroy their minds and bring about the spiritual death which was the loss of the knowledge of God's character. Once they ate from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, they would have the very opposite view of God than the one they previously had. The proof that they completely lost the knowledge of God's *agape* love for them is that an abject fear of God was instantly spawned in their minds.

Some may ask, 'If Adam and Eve lost their knowledge of God's *agape* love, how could present-day humans ever hope to know of it?' The answer is that Jesus Christ came to earth to give us that knowledge we had lost in Adam. This

fact is confirmed by His own words: *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin (John 15:22).*

That is why Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the ultimate truth sent to us by God. He came to bring light to a darkened world, and that light shone brightest when He loved us to the extent of giving His life for us on the cross.

Satan's Law Renders The Mind Incapable Of Understanding Agape Love

Satan genuinely believed that it was impossible to govern the universe by *agape* love. At the outset of Satan's rebellion, God had told him that the path he was contemplating would lead to the certain culmination of a twisted mind. This cognitive domain would be hopelessly anchored in an irreversible mode of fear, destruction and death. The consequence of having such a mind would be fatal because God's *agape* love would have been eternally discarded and rejected by him. But Satan would not acquiesce to God's wisdom, and he therefore rejected God's claim that *agape* love is the only way to govern the universe. Satan did not understand that anything that is not *agape* love will eventually self-implode and lead to annihilation.

Once Satan became God's antagonist, it became impossible for him to operate with a pure mind. Once the choice was made to oppose God's principle of *agape* love, something automatically and radically different from the nether domain took over his mind, and his mind became incapable of operating with God's *agape* love. That is why deception is the preeminent means Satan uses in order to give us the same perverted mind about God. If he manages to get our minds in this skewed condition, he will achieve his goal. Lucifer adopted this disastrous perversion once he determinedly decided to reject God's *agape* love principle.

Satan is fully aware that if the purity of *agape* love is understood and demonstrated, no one will choose or accept to live by his dictum. For Satan to win the great controversy over the character of God, it is vital that the

true comprehension of God's character remain full of misunderstanding and conjectures. Once both principles, God's and Satan's, are understood and demonstrated, his deception will be exposed. Anyone who truly understands God's *agape* love principle will not likely ever worship Satan. For this reason Satan has attacked Christianity, perverting the truth of many of its doctrines, so that the true meaning of the cross will be obscured. One such doctrine is the state of the dead. Without a true understanding of that doctrine, one cannot appreciate what Jesus did on the cross for the human race.

For Satan's deception to be appealing, it had to make such complete sense that logically it would be impossible to deny its validity. To the logical mind, the principle embodied in *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* makes far more sense than the principle from *the tree of life*. Satan's law of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment is the great deception we have all succumbed to because it seems abundantly plausible to us. The Bible repeatedly warns us about how convincing this deception will be unless it is exposed for the lie it truly is. The event of the cross is the only place where this monumental deception about the character of God is denounced and neutralized.

These are the issues that have precipitated the spiritual battle being fought over the minds of intelligent beings; they are issues that involve a choice between God's principle of *agape* love represented by *the tree of life* and Satan's methodology of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. As precisely and concisely as it can be stated, these are the predominant and overriding themes of the Bible. Without the understanding of these themes, it will not be possible for one to arrive at a correct understanding of the Bible or of the God of the Bible, or of Satan for that matter.

The carnal human mind finds Satan's system faultless, as it makes sense and actually works temporarily as well. When we say it works, we should qualify that it works to a point and at a cost. Human behavior responds to punishment but at the cost of the relationship. A loving and mutually respectful relationship cannot exist within the confines of arbitrary punishment, and the pain that is caused by these methods is the reason for so much damage to individuals and relationships.

Satan's Principle Makes Sense To The Carnal Human Mind

If Lucifer's rule of law were not so exceedingly reasonable and logical, it could not have possibly achieved its deadly outcome. Adam and Eve and all of their descendants would not have fallen prey to his deception. Humanity with all of its acumen has followed a similar path to that of one third of highly intelligent angels. We have capitulated to Satan's system of governance from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Humanity has fallen prey to Satan's rule of law because it makes complete logical sense to the carnal human mind. On the other hand, the significance of the *tree of life* principle, God's law of *agape* love which is the essence of His character, and which was demonstrated so completely at the cross, is foolishness to the human mind that does not fully comprehend the ramifications of the statement *God is love*. This conundrum is expressed by the apostle Paul as follows:

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:17).

The wisdom of the cross is foolishness for those who are captivated by Satan's principle. The principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* is the wisdom of this world. Paul reiterates and expands on this fact as follows:

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).

But we speak wisdom among those who are perfect. Who are those that are perfect? They are those who have accepted *agape* love as their main motivating principle. These will show that they live by God's principle when they love their enemies:

...Love your enemies... therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:44, 48).

Yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, that come to nothing. The wisdom of this world is the use of violence against enemies, and it comes to nothing because it brings death:

For all who take the sword will perish by the sword according to Jesus (Matthew 26:52).

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the principle of agape love, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world for our glory; which none of the rulers of this world knew (for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory) (1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

God's *agape* love was hidden because *good and evil* became our master when Adam and Eve sinned; but it is no longer hidden because Jesus Christ has revealed the God of non-violence. *Agape* love was ordained before the world, it is the eternal principle from eternity past, for our glory – to free us from the slavery of *good and evil*; none of the rulers of this world knew it, for if they had known it, they would have recognized in Christ the God of *agape* love, and would not have used violence against Him. We have not received the spirit of the world; we who believe in the God of *agape* love no longer believe and live by the spirit of arbitrary reward and punishment, but by the spirit of God, by the spirit of *agape* love. The arbitrary reward and the arbitrary punishment

rule of law is the wisdom of the world. And we have the mind of Christ when we have the *agape* love of God in our hearts. To have the mind of Christ is to believe and live by this divine wisdom, which is unconditional love.

Only The Cross Unveils The Deception Of Good And Evil

Satan's principle is so ingenious that the deception within it can be exposed only by comparison with what transpired on the cross. The cross, and the cross only, exposes, unravels, and neutralizes Satan's rule of law that is *the wisdom of the world* (1 Corinthians 2:6). Jesus Christ took upon Himself on the cross all the sin that had resulted due to Satan's principle. On the cross Jesus bore all the effects, the aftermath and consequences that resulted from Satan's principle of arbitrary reward and punishment. Thus, the entirety of the immediate and eternal fall-out from Satan's principle has been fully paid by Jesus Christ on the cross.

For He [GOD] made Him [JESUS CHRIST] who knew no sin [GOOD AND EVIL] to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God [AGAPE LOVE] in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21; emphasis added).

Those Who Are Perishing Are Living Under The Deceptions Of Good And Evil

Speaking about the power of God to save us from the principle of *good and evil* by His *agape* love, the apostle Paul states:

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For

the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For the Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Corinthians 1:17–25).

Who are those who are perishing? They are those who, with a carnal, worldly human mind have accepted Satan's rule of law for governance from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. These are those that the prophet Isaiah describes like this:

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light of for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isaiah 5:20)!

Jesus describes them like this:

If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness (Matthew 6:23)!

Looking back at the believers in God at the time of Christ, it is easy to see how the light that was in them was darkness. It was such darkness that they did not recognize the Son of God and put Him to death.

What is required to avoid belonging to those who are perishing under Satan's accursed law of death? We need not perish under Satan's death law because *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (Galatians 3:13)*. If we choose to believe and live under God's government of life we will no longer be under Satan's government of death. If Satan's rule of law of *good and evil* was of God, Christ need not have become a curse for us.

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).

Those Who Are Being Saved, Are Being Saved From The Principle Of Good And Evil

But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. When Paul talks about those who are being saved, he is referring to those who no longer believe in and live by Satan's principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This is the power of God: to believe in, and live by His *agape* love. The cross principle is the power of God. The cross principle is represented by *the tree of life* and is absolutely antithetical to the power of Satan, which is the power of death.

God's Agape Love Destroys The Wisdom Of Good And Evil

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world (1 Corinthians 1:19).

By the cross, by *the tree of life*, by God's *agape* love principle, God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. The wisdom of this world is the use of the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The wisdom of this world is the use of the system of arbitrary reward and punishment.

For since, in the wisdom of God, wisdom that was manifested on the cross, *the world through wisdom did not know God*. That is, the world that thinks that wisdom is the principle of *good and evil* cannot fathom that God would not use arbitrary punishment on evildoers. *It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached*, that is, the message of the cross, of *the tree of life*, which is foolishness to the carnal human mind, *to save those who believe* and live by the principle of the cross, by God's *agape* love. The principle of the cross is foolishness to those who believe in Satan's rule of law.

Punishment Is Used As A Deterrent Against Freedom To Seek Truth

During the dark-ages when the church had autocratic control over the people, any deviation from the commonly accepted belief systems was vehemently and violently rejected. Most people didn't dare explore any beliefs that deviated from the beliefs of the prevailing hierarchy. Despotic and repressive methods were used to suppress any challenges to the predominant teachings, even to the extent of using sadistic means for the execution of so-called heretics. Those

who entertained any form of objection to the status quo belief system were in some cases given the opportunity to recant. The old-guard established church claimed to have the prerogative, in the name of God and with His authority, to punish all heretics. Horrendous methods of punishment were devised and deemed appropriate to punish the evil of heresy, including execution. Punishment was used as a powerful deterrent against those who harbored or promoted any so-called heretical views.

Barbarity Done In The Name Of God

We have more than enough evidence prevailing in our world as well as in past history that all religions, without exception, have adhered to the worship of the hybrid god from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*; these religions have been responsible for atrocities beyond imagination. All of this inhumane barbarity was perpetrated in the name of God and in defense of His principles because people believed that this is how God Himself would have retaliated against all who opposed His commands. For those who believe this way, there is no form of destructive work adequate enough to make sure that God's commands and directives are obeyed and preserved. Intolerance and punishment are fully justified, permitted and God-sanctioned under any and every circumstances, and used without impunity in this belief-system, because this is how they perceive that God deals with evil.

Violent Reaction Is The Sign Of Good And Evil Principle In Us

It is notable that those who believe in the hybrid God of *good and evil* generate from within themselves a radical reaction towards all those who oppose their belief. This reactionary response in itself is confirmation that the Creator God of the universe is not the one whom they are worshipping. When the worshippers of this hybrid God are opposed in any way, when their dogma is challenged or contradicted by anyone, they become radical reactionaries of the most debased kind. Their violent adversarial reaction is intrinsic in their belief-system. This reaction was seen at the trial of Jesus Christ. Our subjective reactions are a natural byproduct of our objective reality, whatever that reality is. Unquestionably it can be stated that when such drastic reaction is present, it is, in itself, proof that it is a byproduct, a reflection of the erroneous belief system of *good and evil*.

All Infirmity, Sickness, Degeneration And Disease Are Caused By Satan's Domain Of Good And Evil

Jesus on the Sabbath day healed a man with a paralyzed hand. The scribes and Pharisees challenged Jesus for this act of healing on the Sabbath;

Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy" (Luke 6: 9)?

As we look at this episode, note that the prevailing belief in Judaism was that any bodily affliction was a punishment from God because of sin. Jesus' desire to heal the man's paralyzed hand would have been something evil if God were responsible for the infirmity as punishment. So if God is responsible for punishing people in this way because of their sins, then Jesus may be

charged with doing evil for healing the man. Jesus is also saying that to do good is to save life. To do evil is to destroy. He is clearly communicating the fact that any form of killing or destruction of human life, including physical disease and infirmity, is not caused by God for they do not arise out of His principle. Jesus wants us to understand that to save life from destruction, which involves even healing sickness, is to do good, and this is part of His principle of life. Therefore He healed the paralytic. We may then conclude that any form of infirmity, sickness, death, and for that matter any and every form of degeneration of the human body is regarded as destroying life from God's point of view, and this is evil in His eyes.

WHAT IS GOD'S AGAPE LOVE

The Knowledge Of God

Proverbs 1:7 states:

*The fear of the Lord is the **beginning of knowledge**. But fools despise wisdom and instruction (emphasis added).*

Proverbs 9:10 further explains this particular knowledge and wisdom:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the **knowledge of the Holy One is understanding** (emphasis added).*

Jesus confirms the importance of having a correct knowledge of the true God, and it is His will that all of us might know *the only true God* from the false god:

*And **this is life eternal**, that they may **know You, the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent (John 17:3; emphasis added).*

At the present time, our knowledge of the Creator is skewed, for we view Him through the lens of sin and Satan's lies. Further, our human understanding of His character has been perverted by six thousand years of estrangement. A true knowledge of God can best be acquired as we go back to the very beginning, to the time when a flawless knowledge of His character existed. The cross reveals God's eternal, unchangeable character as it was from eternity. Jesus Christ on the cross gives us the revelation of God as He was from the beginning because He was the *Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world* (Revelation 13:8).

Who is the ultimate revealer, the perfect revelation of God: the Old Testament or Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ, for,

He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God (1 Peter 1:20, 21).

Whoever transgresses [GOES AHEAD] and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds (2 John 9–11; emphasis added).

For what purpose was the Son of God manifested? The apostle John tells us that He was manifested so that *He might destroy the works of the devil* (1 John 3:8).

From eternity, before the foundation of the world, Jesus Christ already had

in Him what was manifested at His first advent. What is it that was manifested in Him two thousand years ago and that has direct application to us who are living at the end of this age, these last days?

At His first advent Jesus Christ gave the perfect revelation of God's character, a revelation that was nonexistent in its fullness until then. For those of us who are living at the end of time and who passionately desire to know God with no defilement whatsoever, we are to believe in God through no one else but Jesus Christ. That is the only way anyone can know Him. We, who through Him believe in God, will know with certainty that God is *agape* love and that He is not, as some believe, a manslayer, or one who kills. If we believe that God is love and that He also kills, then, on that basis we will sanction or be involved in killing, especially as far as our enemies are concerned. Then, according to Jesus Christ, we will be doing the desires of our father the devil. In John 8:44, manslayer/killer characteristics are definitively and definitely applied to the devil by Jesus Christ and not to God the Father:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning.

This revelation from Jesus Christ exposes the lie that is so commonly believed: the lie that God is love, but also a murderer. As we have seen, God's rule of law is the opposite of the death principle. The death principle is literally the taking of life, and it belongs to Satan's rule of law, the law that is represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Tragically, the majority of the human race believes that the death principle is God's principle when in reality it is Satan's principle. The eternal truth about God's *agape* love principle *has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel* (2 Timmothy 1:10).

It was God's purpose to remove these false concepts regarding His character by giving us Jesus Christ. God, the life giver, gave the pure revelation of His love through His Son, a love in which death has absolutely no place. Jesus came to us from the Father with the message of life and immortality, and He

will give us that immortality after the resurrection:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me the sufferings of the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:7-10).

What has God given to us in Christ Jesus before time began? The gift given to the human race is the knowledge that we are accepted by Him not according to our works of *good and evil*, which gives us a spirit of fear, but according to God's own purpose and grace, which He now has revealed. What has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ is the truth about God's character which was already in Christ Jesus before time began.

Paul's statement, *by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death*, would be a blatant lie were God to be both Creator and destroyer. How can Jesus abolish death if death is a part of the character of God? Isn't God's character eternal and unchanging? Further, since the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ two thousand years ago, death is still unquestionably a reality on planet earth, is it not? Every human being believes that he is going to die. Everyone thinks he will experience death, so how has Jesus Christ abolished death?

There is only one way in which Jesus Christ has abolished death. Jesus Christ has abolished death, past tense, by revealing to us that God is not the cause of death. When we believe the truth about God which has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, then the statement that He has abolished death will be fulfilled. Only Jesus Christ has revealed the truth about

God's character, which is that He does not take life; thus Jesus has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

The Wisdom Of God And The Wisdom Of This World – Divine Wisdom Is To Know God's True Character

We have looked at the verses in 1 Corinthians chapter one, which distinguish between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. In these verses the apostle Paul succinctly and cogently encapsulates the two antagonistic principles that confront humanity. The cross is the measuring stick he uses, and is the one event that separates humanity into two groups of people with two distinct views. Let us look deeper into what Paul, who received his knowledge of God directly from Jesus Christ, has to say regarding divine wisdom:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

The message of the cross and the wisdom of God are one and the same thing, as we shall shortly see.

For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (1 Corinthians 1:19, 20).

God made foolish the wisdom of this world, but how?

*For since, in the **wisdom of God**, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the **message preached** to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:21; emphasis added).*

Notice how clearly it says above that the world, through its own wisdom did not know God. This is even more visibly seen when we behold Jesus Christ. The world did not recognize Him as the Messiah because He was not in harmony with the wisdom of the world, which is based on the principle of *good and evil*.

As Jesus did not operate by the principle of *good and evil*, He therefore was not known for who He was, for the world expected a punishing and violent Messiah who wreaks vengeance on sinners.

*For the Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Corinthians 1:22-25; emphasis added).*

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).

If the world had known the wisdom of God, they would not have used violence against anyone, much less with the Son of God! How ironic! The wisdom of God has been hidden and is still hidden by the principle of *good and evil*, which blinds us to God's wisdom of unconditional love.

But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God (1 Corinthians 2:9-12).

As we are progressively enlightened by the truth of God's love, we receive the Spirit that is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things are revealed to us only by God's Spirit, the Spirit of His unconditional love. No human heart, by the wisdom of the world, can know the depth, the height, the breadth of the love of God.

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For 'who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?' But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:13-16).

The perfect understanding of God's character of *agape* love, as manifested on the cross, is the foundation of divine wisdom. The mind is the vault where this perfect knowledge regarding God's character must be deposited. The mind that has a flawless understanding of God's character as it was revealed on the cross, to the extent that it is possible to have a flawless and unblemished

understanding within our sphere, is the throne room for God's divine wisdom:

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you (1 Corinthians 3:16)?

Those who have a correct understanding of God's character, an understanding that is based on the revelation given by Jesus Christ, are truly the temple of God and are the subject of the following verses written by the apostle Paul:

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3).

As much as a perfect understanding is humanly possible in our sphere, this perfect knowledge of God can be attained through only one Person, Jesus Christ. He is the foundation for all correct understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures. Speaking of the Scriptures, Jesus said: *these are they which testify of Me*. It is apparent, therefore, that an understanding of any scripture that does not harmonize with the character of God as revealed by Jesus is an adulterated understanding, and will affect our relationship with Him and others.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life (John 5:39, 40).

This passage makes it apparent that the Scriptures are there to witness to the character of Jesus, who in turn reveals the Father. When in our reading of the Bible we are confronted by what appears to be a dichotomy, we are to go directly to the revelation given by Jesus Himself. Better yet, it would be wiser to look at the Scriptures through the lens of Jesus Christ from the very outset.

Jesus told us that this knowledge, which He came to give us of His Father, is also eternal life:

And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3).

The Pre-Fall Revelation Of God: The Cross

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the cross gives us the pre-fall revelation, as Jesus was *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world* (Revelation 13:8). When John says that the lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, he is stating that even though the cross event took place only two thousand years ago, the intent to die for the world was already in God's heart before the foundation of the world, because God's love and character never changes, and He is the same now as He was then. The cross then, was simply the carrying out of His pre-existing principle of unconditional, everlasting, unending love:

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6; emphasis added).

The everlasting gospel is nothing else but the good news of God's infinite,

unchanging unconditional love for every single human being, and it is everlasting because it is the essence of God.

Agape Love Is The Very Essence of God

In the Bible we are told that *God is love* (1 John 4:8). It is important to note that John said *God is love* rather than saying 'God has love.' The use of the first person of the verb 'to be' indicates that love is His very essence and not merely one of His attributes. His essence is further represented in the Scriptures as light, which in turn is tied with the word life, so that *love (agape)*, light (*phos*), and life (*zoe*), are key terms used in describing His character. God's essence of *agape* love is selfless, self-sacrificing, unconditional, infinite, because it is not based on the goodness of the one loved, but on the perfection of the Lover. While people are still in their sinful depraved ungodly condition, God's *agape* love has accepted them. *Agape* love is demonstrated thus:

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:6-8, 10).

It is vital for us to understand that God's *agape* love is the very essence of His Being. His character, His essence, is the one and only supreme rule of law, the sole principle by which He has always and ever will govern the universe. All of God's attributes are a reflection of His essence of *agape* love. No circumstances can cause God to react in a way that is different to his character of *agape* love. It does not matter how evil are the circumstances God is confronted with, yet

He remains constant to His own character, the rule of law of *agape* love. God will never operate outside the parameters of His *agape* love principle. God and His *agape* love essence are inseparable, constant, and immutable. Since God is immutable, His essence, this rule of law, is also immutable. The principle of *agape* love is eternal because it is the very essence of God, and God is eternal.

God And His Essence Of Agape Love Are Inseparable

Every action and reaction of God, in all matters, is governed by and is a reflection of His timeless principle represented by *the tree of life*. This timeless principle of His *agape* love is eternal because it is the very essence of God, and God is eternal. God does not operate outside of the parameters of His *agape* love principle. God and His essence of *agape* love cannot be separated and both are constant and immutable.

Agape love is pure

Thus we may state that the essence of God is absolutely pure *agape* love. But even to use the phrase 'pure *agape* love' is a misnomer, for *agape* love has no form of adulteration by any other contrary principle. Hence, by definition, *agape* love is unadulterated and pure. In contrast to Satan's principle of *good and evil*, God's essence of *agape* love positively cannot be a hybrid containing both good and evil. It must remain extremely clear that the one and only true God of the universe does not have these two antithetical principles embodied and mixed in His character. If humanity is worshipping a hybrid God of *good and evil*, then they are not worshipping the one and only true God of the universe.

As arbitrary punishment is non-existent in God's law of *agape* love, there is therefore no arbitrary punishment in God. Every action and reaction of God in all matters is governed by, and is a reflection of, His timeless principle of *agape* love, which was represented by *the tree of life*.

God's pure essence of *agape* love, the sum total of His character and His being, is immortal and indestructible. He would not be immortal, indestructible, and omnipotent if He possessed the kind of power that can destroy all opposition with a blink of an eye. It is only due to His nature of *agape* love, which has no form of destruction in it, that He is immortal, indestructible and omnipotent.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ did not occur by any arbitrary act on the part of God. When Jesus died on the cross, He died because He had lived by the pure principle of *agape* love. It was only because He lived and died by His innate principle of *agape* love that He was able to resurrect Himself through the life which was in Himself. Not a particle of the principle that Satan had introduced in the universe was found in Jesus and that is why Jesus was able to rise again. The domain of death could not hold Him in the grave:

*I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and **he has nothing in Me** (John 14:30, emphasis added).*

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, **yet without sin** (Hebrew 4:15; emphasis added).*

Had Jesus acted or even thought at any point by Satan's death principle of *good and evil*, He would have remained in the grave, and the human race would have been left in bondage to Satan, without the hope of eternal life:

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep [died] in Christ have perished (1 Corinthians 15:17-18).

There is only one ultimate truth from God about Himself, and it pertains to who He is, to His very essence, to His character as God. Truly, God is *agape* love, and all His other attributes are but a demonstration of the core of His being. Even though God has given us this ultimate truth about Himself, we have succumbed to Satan's deceptive falsehood that God's character is a hybrid of *good and evil*, and with this falsehood we are kept in ignorance, living without a perfect understanding of His essence.

Obviously, the hybrid god that humanity is erroneously worshipping is a god of *good and evil*. This god acts by Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. But if we look closer, we will see that this god is not the true God, for the true God can never act by two opposing, antithetical sets of principles. What has really happened is that we have overtly professed and promoted this synthesis as being of God by attributing to God those character traits that belong to Satan. God can never operate by *good and evil*, for it is contrary to His character, His essence. We have popularized and promoted the character of God as having a purported nonexistent union of *agape* love and *good and evil*. However, the moment *agape* love, the principle signified by *the tree of life*, is mixed with anything else, it is no longer *agape love*, and it is no longer *the tree of life* principle. When we claim that God is *agape* love and yet also believe that He in anger arbitrarily punishes sinners for their evil activities, we have failed in understanding *agape* love. This combination is not *agape* love at all. It is simply the principle of *good and evil*.

What Is Agape Love?

Agape love is that love in which there is no selfish agenda involved in performing good deeds toward others. It is that love where everything is done for the betterment of others at one's own expense, even to the extent of dying for others. When Jesus said, *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on*

the unjust (Matthew 5:44, 45), He was defining agape love.

We have further instruction from Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13 regarding agape love:

Agape love is patient, agape love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. Does not act unbecomingly, it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered. It does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth. Agape love bears up under anything and everything that comes. It is ever ready to believe the best of every person. Its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances and it endures everything without weakening. Agape love never fails, never fades out or becomes obsolete, it never comes to an end (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, taken from different versions).

In essence then, agape love is not focused on self but on others, and is unconditional. The death of Jesus on the cross is the ultimate revelation of agape love.

The Events In The Garden Of Eden Give Us Clues Regarding God's Agape Love

When we study the events that took place in the Garden of Eden, we note that it is clearly stated that both trees were in the midst of the Garden, one representing God's principle and the other representing Satan's principle. We understand that in the Garden, *the tree of life* represented God's principle for the governance of the universe, and *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represented Satan's principle for the governance of the universe. These are undoubtedly two antithetical principles, one from God and the other from Satan. The first represents God's character and how He governs; the second represents Satan's character and how, with force and violence, he has been

executing his way of governance. Jesus made an allusion to the use of force being ascribed to God's kingdom when He spoke of those who use Satan's violent methods as a means to enter the kingdom of God:

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force (Matthew 11:12).

Agape Love In The Garden Of Eden – Freedom Of Choice

It is important to realize that both trees, one representing God's principle and the other representing Satan's principle, were in the midst of the Garden of Eden. God does not, nor can He ever, usurp the autonomy he has given to individuals. Inherent in His character of *agape* is to give absolute freedom to everyone, and that includes His adversary. Although this God-given freedom did result in allowing maximum harm to enter into the universe, and it still continues to allow evil even today, it is indispensable to *agape* love.

Satan unquestionably had this freedom when he convinced one third of God's sinless angels to accept his rule of law over God's law of *agape* love. He also had this liberty in the garden with Adam and Eve. His freedom remained intact throughout, even though he had plans to inflict the maximum harm on God, Adam, Eve, and all of God's creation. Satan would go to any extent in order for his rule of law to prevail. Thus it is extremely important to notice that even though he was promoting a destructive principle, he still had the freedom to do it, freedom that only *agape* love can give.

As we contemplate on these thoughts alone, they speak volumes about God's character. Only the God of *agape* love and no other God could grant such freedom. Such volition has inflicted ultimate fatality in the universe, and has prevented God from spending eternity with many of His beloved children. As long as God is the sovereign ruler of the universe, *agape* love will eternally exist, even if the freedom it allows results in ultimate harm being personally

inflicted upon God Himself. The war over God's rule of law of *agape* love and Satan's principle of *good and evil* will eventually end, and inevitably there will be a victor and a vanquished. But God's sole power in this war is His law of *agape* love, and that love will overwhelm and overcome all evil without the utilization of force.

The freedom of choice that God has given us is as sacred as God Himself is sacred. In love, God has given us the freedom to choose life or death, blessings or curses. By the freedom of choice God has given us, we are ultimately responsible, through our choices, for the results that are inherent in those choices. Moses informs us that there are no arbitrary acts of God in rewarding good deeds and punishing evil deeds. Inherent in the choices we make are the paths of life or death, blessings or curses (*See Deuteronomy 28*).

Agape Love Gives Freedom And Equal Access Even To Adversaries

Inherent in God's essence of *agape* love are found two foundational principles, and it is critical that we understand them. The first, which we have seen above, is that *agape* love gives freedom of choice to all. Note again that this freedom is given even to enemies who can harm us and our loved ones. The second foundational principle of *agape* love is that it gives equal access, and again, even to those who are considered enemies or adversaries. Satan, the arch-enemy of God, has been freely given equal access to put forward his principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Jesus illustrated the principle of equal access by the parable of the wheat and tares:

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it

have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn”’ (Matthew 13:24–33).

At the time of harvest the truth will stand, while all that is false will come to its end. We must ask God to help us to discern between truth and error. Unless we know the truth, we will unfortunately succumb to Satan’s deceptions and be the tares, which look very much like the genuine. We will get the tares confused with the wheat by believing that Satan’s principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* is actually God’s principle.

Agape love in the Garden of Eden – Equal Access

If we look closely at the two trees in the midst of the garden, we will see that God is trying to communicate to us something of profound spiritual significance and importance about Himself, especially about His character of *agape* love. When we come to comprehend the significance of this revelation, under the unction of God’s Spirit, it will permit us to grasp an aspect of God’s *agape* love to which we were totally oblivious before. But without the anointing that is needed for comprehension this will appear utterly idiotic to our minds, because what God did is something only He and those who have the mind of God would do. No one with the carnal human mind would ever permit such a thing to take place.

God gave Satan access to Adam and Eve, knowing that what he was going to do would be catastrophic. He also gave Adam and Eve the freedom that would allow them to come into contact with Satan. And He gave Satan freedom of access to them.

As one continues reading, it will be noticeable to what extent God, under His rule of law of *agape* love, gave Satan access to Adam and Eve and vice versa. First we see God allowing Satan to have his principle in the Garden and then we see Him giving Adam and Eve equal access to the two *trees*. Adam and Eve are also given the freedom to choose either to obey God, and thus continue to eat from *the tree of life*, or to disobey Him, and thus cease to eat from His tree.

In the second case, if, and as soon as the couple chose to disobey God, their obedience would be given to Satan and they would eat from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The two ways for living were available to them, and they had complete liberty to choose either God's way or Satan's way. God's *agape* love could not deny Satan equal access nor could this *agape* love deny Adam and Eve the freedom to choose for or against God. Two trees were presented to them, and their choice would determine their fate and the destiny of the human race.

It is noteworthy to point out here that it was in God's very own Garden of Eden that Satan was allowed access to the couple!

The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the Garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2: 8-9).

The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Here, from the biblical perspective, were clearly demarcated the two antithetical principles, and only one of the two was to be utilized for the governance of God's universe. One led to life and the other to death, and it is imperative that under no circumstances this distinction be misunderstood or compromised.

God, the Creator, had visibly separated these two antithetical principles and warned the couple as to the consequences of disobeying Him. The physical

position of the two trees in the middle of the garden reveals that God had given Satan a level playing field. Both trees were equally accessible to Adam and Eve. By their position in the garden it can also be concluded that God did not place Himself in an advantageous stance over Satan before Adam and Eve sinned, but gave him an equal footing. Thus, both God and Satan had equal accessibility to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as revealed by the presence of the two mutually exclusive principles represented by the two trees.

Agape Does Not Use Force Or Violence

If God gives freedom of choice to all his creation, then it becomes obvious that God does not use force or power to make anyone conform to His ways. Along with the freedom He gives, He also first counsels; then allows the choice to be made either for or against His counsel.

As Lucifer decided to rebel, God's methods of dealing with his rebellion became visible as He warned Lucifer of the consequences of his choices. The same behavior is seen as He counseled Adam and Eve not to eat of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

God could have blocked Satan from ever having any contact with them, or He could have shielded Adam and Eve completely from Satan's influence, but He did not. God could have placed the prohibited tree in a secluded, inaccessible location, but because His love always allows for individual choice, *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* was located in the center of the garden, right next to His own *tree of life*. The couple was safe only as long as they followed His counsel to not eat of the forbidden tree. The only power God had in this situation was the power of His love, which Adam and Eve disregarded as they chose to go against His warning.

The use of power, as it pertains to God, has been grossly misunderstood, as has the power of human choice. The choices we make have clear consequences and even God could not spare the world from the consequences of Adam and Eve's choice. In Hebrews 2:1-3 we are told that every choice we make has a consequence, and God, because of His principle of *agape* love, has to honor it:

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

When the God of *agape* love is worshipped, His true followers do not use intimidation, coercion, manipulation or violence to defend their faith or the God of their faith. The more God's truth is challenged, attacked, defied and subjected to intense scrutiny, the more *agape* love, and *agape* love only, will prevail against those attacks. If God's followers use any violence at all in order to defend God and His truth from those that go against it, they prove by their actions that they have an incorrect or limited understanding of God and His character.

Likewise, were one to road-block any proselytizing that is contrary to what one believes to be God's truth, or that one feels is out to curtail God's truth, one would be acting out of harmony with God's principles of freedom and equal access. Such methods of opposition are in themselves an indication that those who use them are not acting according to God's principle of freedom. By the same token, the use of any form of force or of any underhanded method to present God's truth is out of harmony with God's principles as well.

God's Agape Principle Is Clearly Seen By How He Dealt With Lucifer And Adam And Eve

God's principle of love was revealed by how He dealt with Satan and Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He did not use any force to stop Satan from proselytizing, nor did He use any force to stop Adam and Eve from being convinced by Satan's horrendous accusations against God. How could this possibly be God's way of dealing with such evil, and why does He do it this way? The absolute truth about the true God, as seen in His dealings in the Garden, is that God's character does not allow him to react to evil with evil. Nothing could be more evil than the law Satan had at first introduced in the universe, and yet, the same freedom he was granted then was now given in the Garden as well.

By looking at how God dealt with Lucifer, we can see that all who choose to oppose God's truth are given ample liberty to advance their views without fear of intimidation or punishment coming directly from God. Under no circumstances must it be assumed, however, that God does not warn about the consequences of disobeying Him. What are these consequences, and how are they carried out? The consequence of disobeying God is that by doing so, we place ourselves in Satan's domain, from where all punishment, pain, suffering and death arise.

Peter's Dream Reveals God's Attitude Toward Every Human Being

The focal point of Jesus' message is that to become *sons of your Father in Heaven* we must know that *He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45)*.

This is also confirmed in the words of Peter to Cornelius, his family and friends, in Acts 10:28:

Then he said to them, 'You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'

Peter made this statement after the vision in which he

saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, 'Rise Peter, kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' And a voice spoke to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common' (Acts 10:11–15).

Because Peter was so ingrained with the wrong understanding of God's character, this message had to be repeated three times: *This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again (Acts 10:16).*

However, it is apparent from what Peter says in verse 35 that even after this dream Peter does not completely understand what Jesus was trying to convey when He said that God makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. In verse 34 Peter realizes that *God shows no partiality* between Jews and Gentiles. But in verse 35 he qualifies the type of Gentiles that God accepts: *But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.*

God treats those who live outside of His principles in benevolent ways that are beyond anything the human mind can imagine. His love transcends the principle of *good and evil* and does not use any form of force, coercion or destructive actions in order to achieve its objective.

It is by adopting His ways that His true followers glorify the true God of the universe. Meanwhile, those who refuse to believe in the God of *agape* love are

left alone to exercise their freedom of choice and to choose whatever way they want to worship. That would not be possible were God the hybrid God that He is perceived to be. Were He the kind of God that mixes love with force, He would call for the annihilation of all those who are considered or perceived as heretics and who do not conform to His ways.

There Is No Fear In Agape Love Because Agape Love Does Not Arbitrarily Punish

There is no fear in love: but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4: 18, 19).

There is not an iota of anything in God and in His *agape* love that generates fear. The Bible is emphatically clear and certain in this respect. God could never be revered and appreciated for His *agape* love if He ever acted in any way that would cause even a minuscule amount of fear in us toward Him. Should we respond to Him with any such fear, then we will never have *agape* love for Him. It is only God and His *agape* love alone that can cast out any and all fear we have acquired from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This fear originates from Satan, because fear has to do with punishment, torment. There is no possibility of anyone being made perfect by God through *agape* love if fear is involved in the relationship with Him. It is hopelessly impossible and unrealizable for us to respond to God in *agape* love unless He has first shown us that He is *agape* love. Once we are shown His *agape* love, there will not be a trace of fear of punishment from Him engendered in us.

God's Rule Of Agape Love Contains No Arbitrary Reward And Punishment

It is extremely important for us to understand that under the supreme rule of law of *agape* love there is no arbitrary reward for doing good and no arbitrary punishment for doing evil. The rewards that are found in the path of blessings are inherent in the choice to obey God. These blessings are not an arbitrary act of reward, but are inherent in the choice to obey God's kingdom principles. This fact must be resolutely understood and accepted, or else we will believe Satan's deception that God is an arbitrary judge.

God's principle of *agape* love is immutable and transcends the capriciousness that governs the god of arbitrary reward and punishment; this god is influenced by the positive or negative reactions to his directives. Such volatility is foreign to the God of *agape* love, for God is not governed by changes of mood. His infinite love is unmovable, and He operates only within the principle of *agape* love.

Rather Than Punish, Agape Love Takes Punishment Upon Self

And they overcame him [SATAN AND HIS PRINCIPLE OF PUNISHMENT] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death (Revelation 12:11; emphasis added).

Those who have the same love as Jesus Christ has, will take all punishment upon themselves, even if it means that they will be killed. They will not use any violent retaliatory method to defend themselves. This is the ultimate revelation of *agape* love. *The tree of life* is emblematic of God's character of *agape* love, the life-giving Creator of the universe. This principle was demonstrated supremely by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Because of His *agape* love, He took all the fallout for sin from Satan's domain upon

Himself. Inherent in His character of *agape* love, as the cross has revealed, there is no semblance of any form of destructive work towards both lost sinners and their environment.

So then we may ask: how will the sinner perish at the end if God does not destroy them? We are told that Satan and all of his followers will experience the ultimate death in the lake of fire, which is the second death. As soon as we read that, we automatically assume that God literally picks up Satan and sinners and throws them into a literal lake of burning fire. At the same time, Christians also believe that Jesus died the second death in our place. Was Jesus in a literal lake of fire? Or is the lake of fire a symbolic figure to express the torment and anguish that is caused by separation from God, the life source?

Sinners who do not accept the God of love that was shown on the cross will suffer the same mental anguish from the domain of *good and evil* that Jesus suffered on the cross. They will die the death that He had shouldered for them, the death from which He hoped to spare them. The same burning fire, which is the weight of sin and its guilt, that burst Jesus' heart and caused Him to consider Himself completely cut off from the Father, will also burst the sinner's heart.

However, to be even more precise, they will not experience the same anguish that Jesus had on the cross, because He took even that upon Himself. Additionally, since they do not have the same love for the Father as Jesus had, they will not experience the same torment that Jesus experienced as He felt separated from God. The more love one has, the more one suffers when separated from the loved one. Since they have no love for God, their mental anguish will not be caused by the pain of being separated from Him. The pain they will experience will be the physical pain of losing life, since they will be separated from the life source. They will also be crushed by the guilt that is inherent in the principle of *good and evil*, without hope of relief. As Jesus exclaimed the words *Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit* (Luke 23:46) His faith in God was unshaken, even if it meant that He would be eternally separated from the Father. This love shown on the cross for humanity is the meaning of His death, and sheds light on the words: *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me* (Matthew 27:46)!

Why is it that a moral God does not use any method of destruction to punish sinners for their evil acts? If He did, God Himself would be partaking of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. God's morality is His *agape* love that was demonstrated on the cross when He took upon Himself the total punishment for all the effects of sin from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

God Did Not Destroy Satan Because He Is Agape Love

Since God does not destroy His enemies, Satan was not destroyed for his blatant rebellion against God's government. Had He destroyed Satan He would have been in transgression of His own law of *agape* love, and since *agape* love is His character this cannot happen, for God does not act contrary to His own character. If God had the dual character represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, He would have destroyed Satan. All who would have observed this act would have developed an inbred fear for God, and obedience to God would have arisen out of fear. This would have been a violation of His principle of *agape* love. Any destructive activities such as death would be a breach of His principle of giving life. The termination of life is foreign to the God of the universe. Because extermination of life is foreign to the God of the universe, the life-giving unitary principle of *agape* love is symbolized by *the tree of life*. The demise of Satan and all of his followers will be discussed as we proceed in this polemic about God's *agape* love.

The Difference Between Worldly Love And Agape Love

Before moving forward in our understanding of God's character, we must comprehend the difference between God's *agape* love and the conventional worldly meaning of the word love. We must comprehend the vast, limitless difference between the two if we are to understand God's character.

From a purely spiritual perspective, as it refers to the essence of God, these two words have no common meaning. They may appear to have some linkage,

but biblically, according to the cross principle, this conjoining of human love and *agape love* is the height of deception. Our ignorance in not differentiating between the two will deceive us, for it is in this area that subtle and deliberate deception is being used. This deception involves the world and its worship of God. This ignorance has ensnared and captivated the minds of humanity. Under this deceptive falsehood, someone other than the God of *agape love* is being worshipped. This fact cannot be overemphasized, and it must be stated with absolute clarity: the deception that is being used to conceal the irreconcilably vast difference that exists between *agape love* and the worldly meaning of love is overpowering.

Satan, the antagonist of God, wants us to remain in ignorance regarding the difference between *agape love* and the worldly meaning of love. Confusion between the two, is the means by which he achieves his overwhelming deception. Deception is his consummate arsenal by which he has cheated both God and humanity of true friendship, fellowship and worship. Unless this deception is exposed and denounced, Satan will in effect be the object of humanity's worship, which is his ultimate aim. Our failure in not comprehending the difference between *agape love* and the conventional meaning of the word love is also compromising and neutralizing our understanding of God's character, and is responsible for the demonization of God.

At this juncture we will attempt to define the vast difference that exists between love and *agape love*. The reader is requested to keep in mind that *Agape love* is God's love for all, even for those who are degenerate and, in our eyes, unworthy of such love.

*For when we were still without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly.** For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:6-8, 10; emphasis added).*

The common idea of human love is always dependent on the beauty or goodness of its object. It loves its own, such as friends and family, or those who are good to others; this is not *agape* love, but human sentiment:

- Sentiment deals with feelings, emotions, and attitudes.
 - Sentiment can provide the basis for establishing a relationship.
 - Sentiment is superficial and unstable.
 - Sentiment yields to circumstances.
 - Sentiment is Satan's substitute for Love.
 - Sentiment is unforgiving and selfish.
 - Law or principle does not govern sentiment.
 - Sentiment strives to control others.
 - Sentiment grasps and exercises arbitrary power out of fear of losing control.
 - Sentiment is a tool of pride.
 - Sentiment falters in the face of stress and tension.
 - Sentiment collapses in the face of emotional chaos.

Agape, on the other hand, controls feelings, emotions, and attitudes by the principle of *agape* love. *Agape* provides the basis for an unconditional commitment:

- Agape is durable, dependable and will never break a relationship.
 - Agape survives and transcends circumstances.
 - Agape is heaven's plan for human relationships, and has the principle that overcomes the unreliability of sentiment.
 - Agape is generous and forgiving.
 - Agape is law and principle at work, governing the life.
 - Agape seeks to control self and not others.
 - Agape grants power without fear.
 - Agape wins over the power of pride.
 - Agape survives the forces of stress and tension.
 - Agape endures emotional chaos.

When we compare God's love with the so-called love that is present in the realm of *good and evil*, we see that they are two antithetical principles. *Agape* love, from the *tree of life*, is a life giving principle; the ordinary meaning for the word love comes from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This love or sentiment, comes from Satan's principle of *good and evil*, and it takes life.

The Cross Reveals Agape Love

One sole event is the ultimate revelation given for us to truly understand *agape* love: the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Without this divine manifestation, this demonstrable fact, this benchmark revelation, we would have been left in darkness about God's true character. However, the death of Jesus on the cross is an impotent and meaningless event unless we understand the *agape* love that was demonstrated there.

The cross principle was originally given in the Garden of Eden and was represented by *the tree of life*. One may ask how the death of Jesus could possibly be an example of *the tree of life* principle since the event appears to be contrary to the principle, as one demonstrates death and the other addresses life. It was the principle in Jesus' heart as He died on the cross that represented *the tree of life*; it was the self-sacrificing *agape* love of God, the divine love that is willing to give up all, even Himself, for the sake of others. The selfless principle embodied in *the tree of life* is the exclusive, sole antidote to the selfish death principle of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* that has impacted the whole world.

Thus, the principle of God's *agape* love for the human race is demonstrated by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, as He died for the sins of the entire human race. In His death God's *agape* love is authenticated. The power of the resurrection was within the nature of this unique *agape*-based-death on the cross. Innate in this benevolent death was the power of life, and correspondingly, the resurrection from death.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5: 6–8).

Only Jesus Can Save Us From Satan's Principle Of Good And Evil

When Adam and Eve ate from the tree of *the knowledge of good and evil* they in effect gave dominion of the world to Satan; they became Satan's subjects, and Satan became *the prince of this world* (John 12:31). All of us born from Adam and Eve have inherited their condition. Therefore we all have Satan as our spiritual leader and ruler. All of us genetically were in the loins of Adam before we were even born. All of us were already in Adam when he ate from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The principle represented in this tree is in us genetically, and our minds are in bondage to Satan's rule of law for governance. Thus, only Jesus Christ is able to change us back into the image of God:

*O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:24)!*

Jesus Took The World Back By Agape Love, Not By Force

Jesus took upon Himself the consequences of the death principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, consequences that we had inherited in Adam. Jesus revealed that the principle from the *tree of life* was ours by inheritance in Him. While we were still anchored in *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*

principle and belonged to Satan, Jesus Christ died for us and gave us the *tree of life* principle. So in Christ Jesus we all now have the *tree of life* principle. As in Adam we all inherited the death principle, so in Christ we all have inherited the life-giving principle. We personally were not actively involved in choosing either one of these two situations. The way we are actively involved in these two established realities is how we respond to them now. Now that we know the issues at hand, we can choose to live in Adam, under Satan's principle, or choose to live in Christ under God's principle. The choice is still ours to make, whether we live by God's rule of law or by Satan's rule of law.

Why Obey God

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself
(John 12:32).

The *agape* love of God is like a giant magnet that draws, not forces, people to obedience. Once the power of God's *agape* love attracts someone, they begin to respond to Him in a positive way. Jesus knew that the demonstration of His love on the cross, where He was lifted up, would attract and draw us to Himself. What an incomparable difference exists between obeying God out of love, and obeying Him out of fear!

What Are The Consequences Of Disobeying God

When we disobey God we choose to disenfranchise ourselves from God's supreme law of *agape* love, and we position ourselves in Satan's domain of *good and evil*. When God's *agape* love is accepted as the ruling principle in one's life, then one is reconciled to God. God is always reconciled to us. Our minds and lives can never be reconciled to God if for any reason *agape* love is not the governing principle in our lives. When one chooses not to have *agape*

love, then automatically one has moved into Satan's domain of *good and evil*. In this domain are all the different methods of punishment for all the different categories of evil, and pain and destruction ensue.

Agape In The Human Dimension

How can God's *agape* love be demonstrated by humanity in a very obvious way in the horizontal dimension, that is, toward each other? The answer is simple: by how we treat our enemies. Jesus tells us in His own words what was and is the prevailing principle of the world and what God's principle is:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven, for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax-collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:43-48).

When we react to our enemies in love, choosing to die rather than inflict harm on them, even if they, with determination and insatiable hatred are on the warpath to destroy us, then we will be demonstrating *agape* love.

Never anyone spoke with such authority, with such simplicity, with such an insight into the character of God, as did Jesus Christ. In the above directive Jesus Christ has said all that needed to be revealed to us about God. By this pronouncement He has unveiled all erroneous beliefs about God's character and His ways, which have clogged the human understanding since the time

Adam and Eve sinned. Because of this revelation from Jesus Christ we can now experience a break-through in our cognition of God's character. The proof that God is that way was demonstrated on the cross:

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:10).

From a human perspective this love of God appears to be the epitome of foolishness, but from the divine viewpoint it is the power of God:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Under the good of the rule of law represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, enemies are to be destroyed before they can do us any harm. Some would go as far as to say that it is totally immoral to tell someone to love their enemies. Under no circumstances whatsoever can it ever be justified, in Satan's principle of *good and evil*, that enemies be loved as Jesus instructed us to do. Under *good and evil* it makes no sense to love one's enemies, or bless those that curse us, or do good to those that hate us, much less pray for those that spitefully use us and persecute us. Rather, it is the survival of the fittest mentality, promoted by the principle of *good and evil*, that is the rule for how we gain victory over our enemies. In that system, if we are to prevail and survive, we must use all optimum retaliatory weaponry in order to overwhelm the power of the enemy.

The whole world, under the banner of religious belief, is using violence in its perceived and deceived thinking against so-called enemies. The foundational reason for such violence is based on their belief-system about the god of

violence in which they believe. *Satan, who deceives the whole world* (Revelation 12:9), has caused this deception about God to abound in the religions of the world, thus spawning the carnage prevalent currently and throughout history.

Love your enemies is the ultimate revelation that could be given into the character of God, showing how God treats all those who are in opposition to Him. Thus, the greatest revelation of God's character is demonstrated by how He treats those who are categorized as evil, sinful, rebellious enemies. When Jesus instructs us to love our enemies, we may deduce that this primarily has first a direct application to Himself and to God the Father. The Father and Jesus Christ already have this rule of governance in their character of *agape* love, and that is why Jesus Christ directs us to do the same:

You have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5: 38-39, 43, 44-45).

Once again we must reiterate that God would not ask us to do something that He Himself does not do. Before asking someone to conform to any rules of behavior, we must first ourselves conform to those rules. We must be innately in possession of them and believe in what we are advocating ourselves; otherwise we would be called hypocrites. Jesus Christ places God as the quintessential example to be followed because *agape* love is of God and is a reflection of His character. According to Jesus Christ, God wants us to treat other people in the human family, especially those who are our enemies, with *agape* love, because God is like that Himself. God wants us, as His children,

to reflect His character of *agape* because that is how He treats those that are in opposition to Him. In His eyes, what constitutes perfection is stated in the Sermon of the Mount. This is the spiritual understanding of perfection:

That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on just and on the unjust. ... Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5: 45, 48).

Light Destroys Darkness

When good is done under the principle of *agape* love, then *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* principle ceases to prevail. This light, God's unconditional love, destroys darkness.

Our Selfishness Does Not Change God's Agape Love

The Benevolent Benefactor's attitude does not change toward the beneficiaries even if their compliance stems from selfish reasons with the goal of attaining a desired reward. Our selfish motivations have not impacted or altered God's attitude towards us, the beneficiaries of His gifts, and that is purely because He is *agape* love. When Jesus created the earth, He made all things in a state of perfection, but it was His sustaining and upholding power that continually made and still makes life possible. This is confirmed in the book of Hebrews, which states:

...He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His [God's] glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of

His power... (Hebrews 1:2-3).

It is by the word of His power that Jesus constantly provides life to all living things. After sin entered the world through Adam, God did not remove the energy and life-giving force necessary in the upkeep of creation. The slow death of the planet began with a wrong choice and continues to this day because of wrong choices. By these wrong choices we counteract the sustaining power of God and nullify it. But we need to clearly understand that God not once removed the Word that upholds all things. Jesus told us that He sends the rain and the sunshine on all, regardless of who we are, and even as we destroy the earth to the point of extinction, He still continues to bless the world through every possible avenue still open to Him. Had God withdrawn any part of His sustaining upkeep, the planet would have self-destructed from the first moment that sin was introduced. God will continue to send all the blessings He possibly can, until the last ray of His love is blocked or rejected by a world gone awry. But even then, God's *agape* love continues unabated, for one day He will renew and restore all things to its original splendor:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful' (Revelation 21:5).

God's Agape Love Is Unchangeable

It must be noted that God's *agape* love for sinners, whether individually or corporately, does not change. For that matter, God's *agape* love does not alter even for those malefactors who live by the obvious evil that arises from the

principle of *good and evil*:

“For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob” (Malachi 3;6).

The Path Of Blessings Is Agape Love, The Path Of Curses Is Good And Evil

Moses clearly delineated the two paths available to mankind:

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live (Deuteronomy 30: 19).

He also explained the outcome of each path:

Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God...But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you (Deuteronomy 28: 1, 2, 15).

Paul also states the same principle in Galatians, in a passage that contains the identical context of cause and effect. Cause and effect is a fixed law that certifies that whatsoever we sow we will also reap:

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6: 7-9).

What If God Operated By Good And Evil?

One could say that all of the tragedy in the world could have been avoided, had God not been a God of *agape* love. If God had followed Satan's rule of law for governance and exterminated Satan, the originator of evil, we would not have been exposed to all the mayhem that overwhelms our world.

Would this have solved the root cause of the problem of evil? If God had annihilated Lucifer, one would think that He would have temporarily achieved a positively resounding result. But on the basis of eternity it would not have eternally eradicated evil, for God Himself would have been evil. God would no longer have been the God of *agape* love but would have been a very different being. He would have been the ultimate dictator, the ultimate controller of all beings, and the universe would have been literally hell because no one could have escaped His capricious control. In essence, He would have been what Satan accused Him of being. What a blessing that God is *agape* love!

A Divided Kingdom Cannot Stand

As already seen, God does not contradict Himself or go against His own essence because if He did, He could no longer be the God of *agape* love but a god with the dual character traits represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. One aspect of this duality would promote good, not *agape* love, and would be in conformity to the good from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The other aspect of this duality would be in conformity to the evil, again, not *agape* love, from the same *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and He would meet evil by taking life in the manner and way of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. These character traits are in violation of God's essence of *agape* love, which was represented by *the tree of life*.

Agape Is Selfless And Self-Sacrificing

When good is done under the principle of *agape* love, *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* principle ceases to prevail. When there is no selfish agenda involved in performing true good, when everything is done for the long-term betterment of others, even at one's own expense and even to the extent of dying for others, this is *agape* love.

When Jesus said, *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust* He was teaching us God's method of good, He was explaining *agape* love, He was revealing the kingdom of God.

Can Agape Love Punish?

When we look at God as if He belonged to the domain of *good and evil*, we see His character from a distorted perspective. For instance, one out of the many attributes of His character as a Creator God in this belief system of *good and evil* would be that He is love. But within this distorted perspective, He cannot be *agape* love as well. In love, but not *agape* love, He can be a benevolent, good God; but He would be so only to those who are His obedient followers. In this paradigm, the other aspect of His character is revealed to those who are disobedient to His commands and live contrary to the dictates of His counsel. For this group of rebellious people God becomes malevolent, wrathful, the destructive God of His creatures and creation. In this perverted belief system, God's destructive acts are not categorized as evil because it is universally known that God cannot do any acts of evil. The Christian adherents in this belief system claim that God is *agape* love and in *agape* love he punishes evil. But *agape* love and punishment are contradictory to each other.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross confirms God's *agape* love. By His death on the cross, which He suffered for all the sins of humanity, comes the confirmation that God does not use punishment as a deterring mechanism for sins. Here *agape* love reveals that Jesus Christ personally paid for all the punishment for sin, and that God does not directly punish anyone. Punishment does happen, but it comes from the domain that is opposite to the principle of the cross.

In the belief system of *good and evil*, where God is placed into the mold of *good and evil*, these two aspects of *good and evil*, thought to belong to God's character, are not mutually exclusive character traits. According to this belief system, these two character traits of love and force both belong to God. This way of thinking portrays a God who accepts and arbitrarily rewards all the good that is done in life and a God who rejects and punishes arbitrarily for all the evil that is done in life. Many believe that, when coming from God, these two opposing behaviors are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary, comprise one activity of love. Most of the world looks at God like this and believes in this God.

Agape Love Is Unconditionally Self-Giving

The entire human race is actively participating in the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. What is empirically evident is proof positive that God's principle of *agape* love is not believed and practiced on earth. If all of humanity believed and practiced God's *agape* love, the results would be totally opposite to earth's prevailing condition.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and confined is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matthew 7:13-14).

The tree of life principle is the very essence of God. It is His immutable, unconditional, self-sacrificing *agape* love. There were no conditions attached in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. It was unconditional, self-sacrificing and universally

applied. There were no stipulated conditions that had to be fulfilled before the merits of Jesus Christ's death for the sins of humanity could be appropriated:

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

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).

The God of *agape* love did something first and foremost before He received any positive response from sinful humanity. God gave of Himself to the sinners, to the ungodly, to the world, to the entire sinful human race. He gave Himself unconditionally and self-sacrificially. Before we had to do anything. While we were still evil, wicked, ungodly enemies of God, Christ died for us. This ungodly circumstance in which we found ourselves did not cause God to destroy us; on the contrary, He came into our midst in the person of Jesus Christ and rescued us from Satan's domain. We can only subjectively receive this salvation when we internalize and believe in the God who gave His life for us while we were yet ungodly, undeserving and living in enmity toward Him.

Which Faith Is Accounted For Righteousness?

When we believe in this *agape* love of God for the ungodly, this particular faith is accounted for righteousness:

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness (Romans 4:5).

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:10).

Therefore as through one man's offence [THAT IS, ADAM'S OFFENCE], judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation even so through one Man's [THAT IS, JESUS' CHRIST'S], righteous act the free gift came to

all men, resulting in justification of life (Romans 5:18; emphasis added).

How clearly it is stated in this verse that, through Adam, who partook of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, judgment came, resulting in condemnation! Did condemnation come from God? No! Immediately afterwards we read that through Jesus Christ came the free gift of justification. Does God first condemn so that He later may justify? No, condemnation came from the domain of Satan's principle of *good and evil*, and justification comes from God.

If We Believe God Punishes, We Nullify The Cross

Evil circumstances do not change God's attitude, because His *agape* love is unalterable. Even though the evil deeds of evil-doers affect Him with abject pain, nonetheless He still does not utilize punishment as a penal deterrent.

Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and took all the punishment for sin upon Himself. This act is proof that He is not the One who is responsible for punishing sin. The cross confirmed and demonstrated this fact. God's *agape* love, with no latitude for any misunderstanding, fulfilled with absoluteness the moral justice for the sins of the world by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. When we believe that God punishes evil people for their evil deeds, the supreme revelation of God's *agape* love on the cross is completely denied, and what transpired on there is made null and void.

God's truth, mercy, justice and righteousness all are embodied in the principle that is confirmed and demonstrated by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. This principle is validated in the two references below:

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face (Psalm 89:14).

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed

(Psalm 85:10).

By Choosing Violence We Place Ourselves Under Satan

We have seen that God is *agape* love and that He does not arbitrarily punish evil acts, but takes all the punishment due for evil acts upon Himself. The cross has unequivocally confirmed this verity. Violence is an indispensable element of evil, and God does not use violence as punishment on hardened rebellious sinners. This is not the work of God but the work of Satan. By rejecting God's principle and accepting Satan's principle in our lives, we, by our own freedom of choice, place ourselves in Satan's domain and reap the results of our decisions.

Satan has to sustain his rule of law; therefore arbitrary punishment is an indispensable right arm of governance for him. As long as one remains under God's supreme rule of law, there is no punishment from within that principle. When one removes oneself from being under the protection of God's *agape* love, one has chosen to be a party to Satan's principle. From within the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, one is subjected to punishment.

Agape Love Existed From Eternity And Will Continue To Exist Forever

Before Lucifer's rebellion, no discordant principle existed in the universe. Ezekiel 28:15 tells us that Lucifer was *perfect in his ways from the day he was created, till iniquity was found in him*. All created beings enjoyed perfect harmony and communion with God under His rule of *agape* law.

The Bible tells us this state of existence will materialize again at the end of the great controversy when Jesus will rule with an iron scepter: *And He will rule them with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:27.)* The rod of iron represents the

WHAT IS GOD'S AGAPE LOVE

everlasting and life-giving principle of *agape* love, which is as strong as iron. God's principle will be universally recognized and accepted for eternity, and the principle of *good and evil* will be rejected and forever extinguished, for *affliction will not rise up a second time* (Nahum 1:9).

TWO TREES, TWO LAWS, TWO KINGDOMS

*Your righteousness is an **everlasting righteousness** [AGAPE LOVE], and Your **law** [AGAPE LOVE] is truth (Psalm 119:142; emphasis added).*

*The **law** [AGAPE LOVE] **of the wise** is a fountain of **life**, To turn one away from the **snare of death** [GOOD AND EVIL] (Pro.13:14; emphasis added).*

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells [GOOD AND EVIL]; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil [GOOD AND EVIL] I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in **the law of God** [AGAPE LOVE] according to the inward man. But I see another law [GOOD AND EVIL] in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin** [GOOD AND EVIL] which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death [GOOD AND EVIL]? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I*

myself serve **the law of God** [AGAPE LOVE], but with the flesh **the law of sin** [GOOD AND EVIL] (Rom. 7:18–25; *emphasis added*).

In the above passage the apostle Paul describes the spiritual war taking place on the human stage. Paul states that in his Adamic nature, the nature of Adam after he sinned, he is in slavery to the law of *good and evil* in his mind, in his old covenant thinking. He exclaims that he is thankful that through Jesus Christ he has been delivered from this oppressive condition. Jesus Christ's revelation about God's character of *agape* love, has, by the Spirit of life that is in Christ, freed him from the law of sin and death.

However, the law of sin and death, *good and evil*, is still in his nature, thus still affecting his mind. Therefore this nature wars against his renewed mind in respect to what he knows about the *agape* love law of God. By the ministration of God's Spirit he is no longer in slavery to *good and evil*. Since learning of the love of Christ and the Father, he now has a mind that knows God's law of *agape* love, and even though he still falls prey to *good and evil* in his behavior, he is restrained by the empowerment of the Spirit of Christ Jesus.

In his mind he serves the law of God, being fully cognizant that God does not operate by the principle of *good and evil*. Therefore, because of what he has come to know through the Spirit of Christ, he no longer attributes to God the principle of *good and evil*. Without the Spirit of God, however, he would operate in the flesh and serve the law of *good and evil*; that is sin.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ [AGAPE LOVE] has made me free from the law of sin and death [GOOD AND EVIL] (Romans 8:1, 2; emphasis added).

Paul clearly expresses that only in the Spirit of Christ Jesus can there be a true

understanding of the law. Thus we are no longer under the condemnation of the law of *good and evil* which erroneously had caused us to believe that God operates by it.

One Eternal Law

Before iniquity originated in the universe, only one law existed from eternity past. This law embodied the essence of God, His *agape* love. The governing methodology used by the *agape* love rule of law is based on the character of God. Therefore, the principle of *agape* love is constant as God is constant, and circumstances cannot and do not change its mode of operation. Since the law of *agape* love is the essence of God, it is as changeless as God himself is changeless, and it does not alter or adjust itself to the different situations that it may confront.

For I am the Lord, I do not change (Malachi 3:6).

Failure to understand this ultimate fact about God's character and His law, has deceived us into believing that God operates by "situation ethics." Since we are duped into believing such a lie about God, we do the same. God is eternally constant and operates purely by *agape* love.

*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is **no variation or shadow of turning** (James 1:16,17; emphasis added).*

The singular law of *agape* love for the governance of the universe was no longer a reality when Lucifer introduced his law of *good and evil*. However, even in the face of iniquity, the rule of law of *agape* love did not change from within itself in order to address the new circumstances. *Agape* did not make any adjustment to the new circumstance of evil, because *agape* is principle based.

With the introduction of Lucifer's law of *good and evil*, there were now two laws and a visible choice came into existence. True to His own freedom-giving law, God allowed Lucifer to promote and enact his new law. So we see that even in the face of iniquity, for Lucifer's new law is iniquity, the rule of law of *agape* love did not change. Because it is principle based, its principles remain constant, unchangeable even in the face of new circumstances. So if we say that God's law gives freedom of choice, then we must understand that it gives freedom of choice even if the choice in question may be as disastrous as was Lucifer's new law.

God's Law Of The Universe Is In Harmony With His Character

Why was God's law of *agape* love the supreme unchangeable law for the governance of the universe from eternity past? The answer lies in the fact that God as the Creator of all things transcends everything. And since *agape* love is His very essence, there cannot, therefore, exist any possibility for anything else to transcend the essence of His being. Nothing else in the universe surpasses the preeminent, absolute supremacy of God's law of *agape* love. Everything that had ever existed was in complete harmony with His character and was manifested in all His acts. Since nothing in the entire universe can exceed or go above God, His law governs the universe.

Before Lucifer sinned, all of his activities were in complete accord and conformity to God's law of *agape* love. He lived by it with absolute joy, and with no reservations. While he conformed to the principles of *agape* love, he enjoyed peace and harmony within himself and with God, till iniquity was found in him.

The Two Trees

When Satan came to the earth along with the angels that had adopted his new law, he brought his law with him. The two trees planted in the middle of the Garden of Eden represented the two antithetical, irreconcilable principles, one representing God, and the other Satan. One was the fountain of life, the other the source of death.

We will all agree that God and Satan are two personalities that are at the ends of the spectrum in every way imaginable. In fact, one might even say that they are not even in the same spectrum. They are irreconcilably at opposite ends of the pole in every aspect of their being.

We may then conclude that the two principles represented by the two *trees* in the Garden are as antithetical to each other as God is antithetical to Satan. There are no commonalities whatsoever existing between the principles of God and the principles of Satan. From this perspective then, as we have seen, the war that is taking place between good and evil, between God and Satan, is a war between the principles of the *tree of life* and the principles of the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. It is not a war between the *good* and the *evil* which belong to the *tree of good and evil*, because both of these involve violence. Only *agape* love is truly good, and the law of *good and evil* is altogether evil.

God's Tree Of Life

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us — (1 John 1:1-2).

From the beginning Jesus was with the Father. The life that is in the Father is also in Jesus.

In the garden, *the tree of life* represented God as the source and sustainer of life. It symbolized that He is the source and sustainer of life only, and had nothing to do with death. In the sentence *for the life was revealed*, the article *the* before the word *life* is used to emphasize that only life comes from God and no form of death originates from Him – He is *the life* and so is Jesus. *The tree of life* was a representation that obeying God and Jesus, who are the source of life, resulted in the perpetuation of life. This tree represented God and revealed Him as the antidote to death, not the cause of death. This tree represented God as the source and sustainer of life and immortality, freely given to all who chose to remain under His protection.

Satan's Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil

Satan's *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represents the opposite of anything that is of God, and is called iniquity, or lawlessness. With what we have established in the previous chapters, it is apparent that the Bible's usage of the word lawlessness describes any principle or law not having *agape* love as its foundation. *The tree of the knowledge of good and evil* represented the death principle, which was the hybrid rule of law Satan had proposed for the government of the universe. As we have seen, this law arbitrarily rewards those who do good and arbitrarily punishes those who do evil. Punishment for evil leading to death is an integral part of Satan's law. Satan is the source, sponsor and promoter of the death principle for all who choose his form of government.

There Are Only Two Laws From Which To Choose

So we see that the two trees represented two opposing rules of law: God's law based on His own character of love, and the other Satan's law of *good and evil*. God's law of *agape* love had its ultimate revelation and demonstration by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. God's love was authenticated by what transpired on the cross when Jesus Christ died for all of the sins that were committed as a result of using Satan's rule of law of *good and evil*. No other options or alternatives are available to the universe. Were we to scrutinize all thinking and actions of all living beings, we would conclude that in their basic premise, they fall under the hegemony of one of these two principles. God's principle of the *tree of life* gives life and does not take life under any circumstances. Satan's principle of the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, on the other hand, can only take life, for as a created being, Satan cannot give life, he can only take it away.

Each Tree Also Represents A Kingdom And A Character

Not only do these two trees represent two completely antithetical laws by which their respective kingdoms operate, but they also represent two diametrically opposed characters: God who is loving, longsuffering and delighting in mercy; and Satan, who is forceful and violent. We see this contrast in the Bible's description of Lucifer and of Jesus. Ezekiel 28:16 describes Lucifer thus:

*By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned.*

Isaiah, on the other hand, portrays Jesus as nonviolent:

And they made His grave with the wicked – But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth (Isaiah 53:9).

The Two Antithetical Principles Cannot Be Reconciled

The principle of *good and evil* is antithetical to God's *agape* love principle from *the tree of life*. With all that we have established in previous chapters, there is no way to evade this fact. These two incompatible and irreconcilable principles can never belong to, or co-exist in, the God of *agape* love, the Creator of the universe. They do not share any common ground and do not overlap in any possible way. They are absolutely mutually exclusive, being worlds apart and without any link to each other. We cannot stress enough just how diametrically opposed they are. They are as far apart as God and Satan are apart. The contrast is infinite.

The tragedy of tragedies is that most of the followers of God, and in particular those within the Christian persuasion, have attributed to God a hybrid personality comprised of elements that arise from Satan's principle of *good and evil*.

Satan's principle of *good and evil* has been wrongly portrayed as having two opposite and antithetical precepts within itself. We have come to believe that the good of *good and evil* belongs to God, and the evil belongs to Satan. But as discussed in chapter two, this hybrid principle belongs completely to Satan, and is in its entirety evil. The good and the evil of the principle of *good and evil* are both evil. It was to make this point that Jesus answered in the following manner the rich young ruler who has asked Him what *good* deeds he should do in order to inherit eternal life: *Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God* (Luke 18:19). God's goodness is an altogether different kind of goodness than the one that exists in the world. God's goodness is His *agape* love, and it has no relation to the good from the principle of *good and evil*.

The fault in this confusion lies with us, for we have under-estimated the

profoundness of what Lucifer, who had the mind of a genius, proposed. We cannot conceive that God would allow him the freedom to devise such a masterful, logical evil principle. His intended principle was ingenious as an alternative to agape love. The deception has been achieved because it is so logically systematized and thoroughly sound to the carnal mind that does not understand the principle of the cross. It is so rationally convincing that its deception is impossible for normal human wisdom to discern and penetrate, except through the cross principle. The cross event is the only place where the deception is exposed.

Satan Wanted To Replace God's Agape Law With His Own Law Of Good And Evil

Lucifer's highest ambition was that his principle of *good and evil* should have been accepted by God as the supreme law of the universe. We can make that claim because we know he wanted to *exalt his throne above the stars of God* (Isa. 14:13). If this principle had been accepted by God, then God would have arbitrarily rewarded when one did good and arbitrarily punished when one did evil, just as Lucifer is now doing on earth. He believed that the rule of law he proposed made much more sense than God's supreme law of *agape* love. Because he believed that the principle of *agape* love as a law for governance was ludicrous, he felt strongly that it should be replaced by the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. He maintained that no one can have a relationship with God based purely on *agape* love, and that the arbitrary reward/punishment system is the only way we can have a relationship with God. The contrary, of course, is the truth.

The Law Of Agape Love

Jesus taught that God *makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:43)*. Jesus taught that God simply loves all His creatures and showers them with His blessings regardless of who they are or what they do. Since we are all evil (no one is good but One, that is, God, Luke 18:19) then in actuality there are no truly good people on earth, as human goodness is always tainted by selfishness. But God blesses all, irrespective of our actions. That is unconditional love in action.

In God's rule of law of *agape* love, which is a representation of His character, freedom to choose for or against Him is intrinsic, indispensable and inseparable from His character. When one chooses to obey God, inherent in that choice are the fruit of blessings. These blessings are not an arbitrary act of reward from God, but are inherent in the choice to obey God. When one chooses to disobey God, inherent in that choice is the decision to place oneself in Satan's domain of *good and evil*, the only other alternative, and the one in which curses are experienced. That fact must be unequivocally understood and accepted or else the consequences will result in believing Satan's lie that God treats us according to our behavior.

The preponderance of Christians claim that it is apparent from the Bible that God does operate arbitrarily. They believe that when circumstances demand it, He utilizes the death principle that emanates from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

To avoid such an erroneous understanding from developing, God illustrated the two principles at the very beginning of human history in a simple and graphic display by the two trees in the Garden of Eden. The two trees which represented the two antithetical and conflicting principles were in place in the Garden of Eden before sin occurred in our world.

It is imperative that this understanding be the paradigm we use when studying the character of God, as failure to do so will result in a complete misunderstanding of God's character. Not grasping this principle is the root cause of all false knowledge of God.

Under no circumstances does God's *agape* love punish anyone. On the

contrary, God and all who live by *agape* love take punishment upon themselves instead of harming or punishing the wrongdoer.

Satan's Agenda Is To Destroy God's Supreme Law Of Agape Love

Satan has the singular agenda to make null and void and bring to an end God's supreme law of *agape* love as the way of governing the universe. To achieve this end he is utilizing his law of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment. Humanity has mistakenly believed that this evil system originated from God and is His rule of law. The whole world has been deceived in this respect. Satan has to resort to deception because he is fully cognizant that *agape* love cannot be breached except by deception. Therefore, subtly and convincingly he is surely accomplishing his agenda by making us believe that *good and evil* is God's principle.

Have The Ten Commandments Been Abolished?

Some passages in the Bible appear to indicate that the Ten Commandments have been abolished. We will take a look at some of the verses that address this issue, and we will see that is not the case. In fact, the law of *agape* love is the foundation of the Ten Commandment law, and Jesus confirmed this when He said that love for God and for a neighbor was the totality of the law.

Romans chapter seven looks at the hold that that law has, and uses the example of the marriage between a man and a woman. In this chapter, Paul informs us that the Ten Commandment law of *agape* love is certainly not sin, for sin brings death. On the contrary, he tells us that the law of *agape* love is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. This law of love is also spiritual. Therefore, for these reasons he delights in the law of God. Then, after making such statements, Paul says that the commandment which was to bring life, he finds to bring death. How can *agape* love bring about death? The

answer is simple: the problem is not with the law but with us and our carnality. Because we are in bondage to the sin of *good and evil* we interpret the law of life from the perspective of *good and evil*. So when viewed from the lens of *good and evil* the law that was to bring life brings death instead.

Or do you not know, brethren, (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; though she has married another man (Romans 7:1-3).

When the Ten Commandment law is viewed and lived by the principle of *good and evil*, it has dominion over us as long as we live within that paradigm.

In this context, the word *dominion* means that this law has repressive supremacy and control of our lives. While under such a law, we are bound by this onerous principle and we cannot be freed from such a demonic edict until we die to it.

As long as we impute the law of *good and evil* to the Ten Commandments, which is a reflection of God's character, we will have a distorted view of God and will never have that oneness that God wants to have with us.

We cannot attribute both *agape* love and *good and evil* to the Ten Commandments because they are antithetical principles. Such a mixture is neither in God's character nor in His Ten Commandment law of *agape* love.

In our deceived condition, we may assign *good and evil* to the law of God; but when we do such a thing, we commit spiritual adultery. In order to be released from this adulterous condition we must first die to the belief that Satan's principle of *good and evil* is God's moral law. After our minds have been cleansed from this sinful understanding we are then set free to be married to Jesus Christ and His law of love.

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:4–6).

Paul further expounds that we have become dead to the law of *good and evil* through the body of Christ. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has revealed and confirmed God's law of *agape* love and this law is also intrinsic in the Ten Commandments. With this understanding, in the newness of the Spirit, we are dead to viewing the law with the mind of *good and evil*. We must not ascribe the principle of *good and evil* to the Ten Commandment law. This is what Paul had done before his epiphany. Now he advises us not to do what he did before his conversion, because that was the oldness of the letter. The oldness of the letter is what was in all of us prior to the revelation Jesus Christ gives of the Father. When we, by the Holy Spirit, receive Jesus Christ's revelation, then, like Paul, we will be able to state:

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me (Romans 7:7–11).

Paul clearly points out that without the Ten Commandment law of *agape* love we would not be sinning or transgressing it:

for where there is no law there is no transgression (Romans4:15). Sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans5:18).

If God's law of *agape* love was nonexistent sin would also not exist. Are we to conclude that the law of *agape* is sin, because if there was no law of *agape* love there would be no sin? Paul passionately exclaims "certainly not!" He says that sin, taking opportunity by the commandment of *agape* love, produced in me all manner of evil.

Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good (verse 12) and unchangeable, because its principles emanate from God. The law will also remain unalterable in us as long as we do not subject it to the principle of good and evil. If we do, it will certainly bring death to our understanding of God's character.

Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful for we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin (Romans 7:13-14).

Sin is Satan's rule of law, his principle of *good and evil*. If it was not for the law of *agape*, sin would be nonexistent. In love, God asks us not to covet. We will not want to covet if our lives are governed by *agape* love. If we are dead to *agape* love, the law that states 'You shall not covet' will cause us to covet because we are under the domination of the sinful law of *good and evil*.

Thus, the Ten Commandments can be interpreted either by a mind controlled

by the principle of *good and evil*, or by a mind inspired by the principle of *agape* love.

The Flesh Or The Carnal Mind Is The Law Of Good And Evil, The Spirit Is The Law Of Agape Love

The Bible refers to the innate human nature as the flesh or the carnal mind. The flesh or the carnal mind is the principle of *good and evil* in us. Romans chapter 8 makes the distinction between living by Satan's principle and living by God's principle:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh [GOOD AND EVIL] but according to the Spirit [AGAPE LOVE]. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus [THE LAW REPRESENTED BY THE TREE OF LIFE] has made me free from the law of sin and death [SYMBOLIZED BY THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL]. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the Law [AGAPE LOVE] might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh [GOOD AND EVIL] but according to the Spirit [AGAPE LOVE]. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded [GOOD AND EVIL] is death, but to be spiritually minded [AGAPE] is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can it be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:1-8; emphasis added).

There is therefore now no condemnation only because those who are in Christ

Jesus have understood and appropriated God's unconditional love. They know that no matter what the circumstances, God does not condemn them, but accepts them unconditionally. They no longer believe that God looks at them with a mindset of *good and evil*, and they have no more fear of punishment. In addition, they themselves also do not use the principle of *good and evil* anymore in their relationship with God and others.

The law of unconditional *agape* love *has made us free from the law of sin and death* (verse 2). When Jesus demonstrated God's unconditional *agape* love on the cross, it was thus that *He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness requirement of the law [of agape love] might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the [law of good and evil anymore] but according to the Spirit [of agape] love* (verses 3, 4).

To be carnally minded is death (verse 6) because God said it was: *for the day you eat of it you shall surely die*. That the *carnal mind is at enmity against God* (verse 7) was immediately apparent when Adam and Even ate *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* and hid from God. We must not forget that what affected their minds has also affected ours, and that is the 'knowledge' of *good and evil*.

If God dwells in us through our acceptance of the testimony of Jesus Christ and through our adoption of the law of *agape* love, we will no longer operate under *good and evil* and we will have life and peace.

The law Of Good And Evil Leaves Us Guilty Before God

The entire human race has fallen prey to Satan's law by utilizing the principle of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment. Those who have not been deceived by this principle and know that *good and evil* is not of God are the exception. Not surprisingly, even with this knowledge, there is still an uphill battle for those who do not wish to live by the law of arbitrary reward and punishment, for it is so ingrained in us. For this reason therefore *now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God* (Romans 3: 19).

All people on earth live by the law of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment in some form or another, and under that law, all consider themselves guilty before God. We will never attain perfection and earn a right relationship with God by adhering to the law of *good and evil* because all this law ever does is it makes us believe that we are guilty before God. But by God's perfect law of *agape* love, we are all justified before God, are we not? If we relate to this law of grace and the righteousness of Christ, then we know that God does not condemn us. The world is judged by only one law, the law of *good and evil*. Jesus came to show us that God does not condemn us as the law of *good and evil* condemns us:

When our knowledge of God's character is untainted by *good and evil*, the following passage will meet its fulfillment:

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:18-20).

Paul states clearly that the whole human race does not seek after God and that we are all on the wrong track.

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have before charged both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, as it is written: 'There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they have together become unprofitable, there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they have used deceit,

the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their way, and the way of peace they did not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes' (Romans 3:9–18).

Why does this passage say that no one seeks after God when we know that God has put in all of us a desire for Him? In some parts of the world, just about everyone is seeking after God, and the people are very spiritual! And yet, the Bible clearly states that not seeking God is the universal condition of humanity without any exception. No one is excluded because no human being has understood and lived by God's *agape* love. Because everyone lives by the principle of *good and evil*, none are righteous, no not one. No one understands God and His *agape* love. Not one seeks after the God of *agape* love. We have made God into our own image, into a God of *good and evil*, and that is the God we seek.

We must understand that we are all utilizing the same principles as Satan as we go about trying to attain our individual goals in life. We all use principles that are contrary to God's *agape* love principle, and try to achieve our own selfish goals by whatever methods our minds can conceive. Not one of us is righteous in this connection; no not one is excluded from conforming to the law of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment, the methodology of Satan.

When we take the Ten Commandment law and apply to it the principle of *good and evil*, then we are under the law and still guilty before God. What does it mean to apply the principle of *good and evil* to the law? It means to attempt to keep God's good law out of fear of punishment and condemnation, or out of a hope of arbitrary reward from God. That is why some Christians believe that we are under the condemnation of the law because we have failed to keep it. None of us are able to keep the law in the flesh, that is, with the mindset of *good and evil*. When we look at the law, God's *agape* love, we realize how far removed we are from that love, which makes us realize our sinful condition – *through the law is the knowledge of sin*. It is then that we will realize our need of Jesus Christ.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe (Romans 3:19–22).

The Bible classifies all that adhere to the belief system from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* as those who are *under the law*. The followers and worshippers of a God of arbitrary reward/punishment are under the law of this erroneous belief system. *Now we know that whatever the law says, about this deviant belief system, it says to those who are under the law, under the law of this godless belief system, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

We are guilty of participating in this flawed belief system that is not of God. The obvious empirical evidence cannot be denied that the entire world in one way or another is systematically governed by this arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment system, which is why all the world is guilty before God. Guilty – for the system itself is intrinsically saturated with the evil of guilt. Because the system of arbitrary reward and arbitrary punishment is innately antithetical to God's unconditional *agape* love, it is therefore permeated with accusation, resulting in the state of being in which all the world may become guilty before God.

Is The Law Therefore Sin And Has It Been Abolished? What About The Sabbath?

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law (Romans 7:7).

If the Ten Commandment law is sin, then we must also ask the question: is the Sabbath law sin? This is an extremely crucial and critical question, and it will be discussed in great detail in chapter seven. We must clearly understand whether the Sabbath law is sin, and whether God has abolished this law, having nailed it to the cross. In addition, we must know for certain whether God replaced the seventh day Sabbath with Sunday, the first day of the week.

Answering the above question, the apostle Paul passionately cries out and says *certainly not!* He goes on to say, *on the contrary I would not have known sin except through the law.* *Except through the law* is the only specific way Paul knew that to break the Ten Commandments, which includes the Sabbath commandment, was a sin.

Satan has tried to discredit God's law of *agape* love in any and every possible way. He has taken particular aim however, on the seventh-day Sabbath, for he knows that when we come to understand the true spiritual meaning of the seventh-day Sabbath, his masterful deception regarding the true character of God will be unmasked. The attack on the seventh-day Sabbath, which is one of the commandments of God's law of *agape* love, is an age-old attack and continues to this day.

There is a segment of Christianity that has taken some biblical passages regarding the Ten Commandment law, and have distorted their meaning by not comparing Scripture with Scripture, thus not looking at the picture in its entirety. One of these passages is found in Colossians 2:14-17:

...having wiped out the hand-writing of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He

made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ (Colossians 2:14-17).

Most modern-day Christians claim that the above passage refers to the Ten Commandments, and thus they deny the sacredness of the seventh-day Sabbath. However, does the apostle Paul convey the notion that the seventh-day Sabbath was just an ordinary day like the ceremonial sabbath days, which were festivals that were put in place after sin, and which were a *shadow* that met its fulfillment on the cross? If that were the case it would no longer be necessary to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, just as it was no longer necessary to observe the other Sabbath days after the cross event. But is that what he was communicating in the verses above? We must bear in mind that the principle of the seventh-day Sabbath, which is a component of the law of *agape* love, preceded the creation of Adam and Eve as well as sin in our earthly sphere. The ceremonial sabbaths were introduced by Moses approximately twenty-five hundred years after Adam and Eve were created and after they sinned.

What Was Really Abolished At The Cross?

The following passage states that on the cross Jesus *abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances (Ephesians 2:15)*. To what does this passage apply? Is the Ten Commandments law, which includes the seventh-day Sabbath commandment, no longer applicable because Jesus nailed it to the cross?

The answer is a resounding no! It is the law of commandments contained in ordinances that were abolished. They were those commandments that were Judaism's ritualistic commandments, and which pointed to the Advent and life of the Messiah. These were not the moral law of God.

The Ceremonial Sabbaths Were Done Away Because Jesus Fulfilled Them

Paul is not saying that the Sabbath of the seventh-day of creation week is the *sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come*, of which *the substance is of Christ*. Nor is he saying that the seventh-day Sabbath belongs to *the law of commandments contained in ordinances*. In this passage he is specifically referring to the ceremonial sabbaths of Leviticus chapter twenty-three. These were types, symbols, and rituals instituted after sin. They ceased to have meaning after they met their fulfillment in the different aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ's own words deny that the seventh-day Sabbath came to an end at the cross. In the passage below He warns us of a future event, an event that will take place much later and way beyond what transpired on the cross. In this prophecy of the end time He confirms that the seventh-day Sabbath will still be undeniably applicable just prior to His second coming:

But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matthew 24:19-20).

The Law Of Good And Evil Was Also Abolished At The Cross

The two antithetical principles in question represented by *the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* must be addressed and dealt with as two separate principles. They are mutually exclusive principles. They must never be fused or thought of as belonging to the governing principles of God, which is what we have done. By dying on the cross, Jesus abolished such erroneous notions.

We replaced God's supreme rule of law of *agape* love with Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Arbitrarily rewarding the good and arbitrarily punishing the evil is claimed and promoted not only as being God's rule of law, but as being His law of *agape* love.

We will be freed from deception when we come to understand the purity of God's *agape* love as shown by Jesus' death, and when we stop fusing and tainting His love with Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

God's Law Is Foolishness To Some Because It Does Not Arbitrarily Punish

Without spiritual discernment, God's *agape* love is the epitome of foolishness to the human intellect. One third of intelligent beings in the transcendent sphere believed this to be true and refused to believe that *agape* love is a workable rule of law. *Agape* is complete insanity to the carnal human mind for the single reason that God's *agape* love has no mode of arbitrarily punishing evil. While it allows an individual the freedom to choose evil, it does not punish that individual. All punishment comes from Satan's domain.

Conversely, to the carnal mind, Satan's law is the embodiment of wisdom because it punishes evil. Satan arbitrarily rewards evil and good, and punishes evil and good as well, as long as the end justifies the means. If one chooses to operate by his law of *good and evil* one removes oneself from under the

protection of God's law of *agape* and places oneself under the destructiveness of Satan's rule of law.

The Angels Who Accepted Satan's Good And Evil Rule Of Law Are Sealed In Their Choice

Satan's proposed replacement of God's rule of *agape* love for governing the universe was not an impulsive thought. On the contrary, he thought it out, and on the surface it appeared rational and was very convincing.

Intellectually, the choice he offered made abundant sense in that it was perceived to be ethically indisputable and logically flawless. For these very reasons one third of highly intelligent angels rejected God's rule of *agape* love and accepted Satan's law, which was later represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* in the Garden of Eden.

A third part of the stars of heaven, mentioned in Revelation twelve, verses three and four, represents the number of the angels that followed Lucifer in his rebellion:

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth.

The Bible proves that the fallen angels are roaming the earth. They were cast... onto the earth along with Satan who is ultimately responsible for convincing them to accept his law.

Further evidence that the fallen angels have assimilated and adopted Satan's belief system of *good and evil* can be found in many of the verbal exchanges they had with Jesus and in the fear they now have toward God:

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs,

exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time (Matthew 8:28–29; emphasis added)?

Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God (Mark 1:23–24; emphasis added)!

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble (James 2:19; emphasis added)!

The minds of the evil angels now view everything from their adopted paradigm based on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and as destroyers themselves they now see God in the same light. By their clear choice one third of sinless beings in the transcendent sphere demonstrated that they firmly believed that the message of the cross is foolishness, that message which is God’s unconditional love and which is the power of God. They not only thought God’s law of love was foolishness but also firmly believed it would be the downfall of God and His government. It was for this reason, therefore, that they accepted Lucifer’s principle of good and evil. They came to believe that Lucifer’s principle of good and evil had the true power for the governance of the universe. Like him, they felt that without arbitrary punishment for evil, it is impossible to govern.

Thus the more heinous the evil perpetrated, the more severe should be the arbitrary punishment. In fact, to more effectively deter evil from happening, the punishment should be even harsher than the actual crime warrants. The consequential arbitrary punishment dispensed should be even greater, so that the evil will not be repeated. In their darkened minds this punishment became the only way to curb evil. It is to those who are thus influenced by Lucifer’s principles that the message of the cross is foolishness.

We know that the essence of God is agape love. This single, ultimate law of agape love was the principle that governed the universe. What made Lucifer commit himself to such an antithetical thinking to that of God is stated by Isaiah in chapter 14:13-14:

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.'

Lucifer firmly believed that his principle, his rule of law, was better than what God had in place to govern the universe. It is his desire to be worshipped at any cost, and he can use what God cannot – force.

Human beings, with their brilliant minds, have accepted exactly the same law. The difference between the two classes of created beings, angels and humans, is that one third of the angels were not under the same delusion as the human race, who are deceived into thinking that Lucifer's law for governance is God's law. The angels (now demons) who accepted Lucifer's law know exactly what they believe. Accordingly, their decision is sealed for eternity.

Humanity, however, due to its thousands of years of degeneracy and the very subtle nature of Satan's deception, is still on probationary time. God in His mercy will ensure that the gospel – the eternal and true character of God, the good news of God's *agape* love, that He is the Creator and not the destroyer of people, and that He does not operate by Lucifer's principles – is made available far and wide before Jesus' Second Advent. Humanity's fate is not sealed till it will be known with certainty before the Second Advent of Jesus Christ that God does not operate by Lucifer's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

God is patiently waiting for humanity to come to the realization of the deception that is controlling our minds and every aspect of our activities. This error in thinking, and the resulting actions, must be corrected when

the truth is given. Once the truth is given, rejection of the truth about God's character will result in what the Bible refers to as a hardening of the mind or heart. This will lead ultimately to the mind being completely hardened in favor of the hegemony of Satan's rule of law, which will have eternal consequences.

After the truth is given, all, whether believers or unbelievers in God, who continue to believe that Satan's law is the way to govern, will reflect it in their lives.

All who have embraced Satan's principles, including some of the professed followers of God, will react in ways that will predictably harmonize with the principle of *good and evil*. With a blasphemous mindset, their belief will be revealed in certain fixed ways. For instance, they will vote for candidates who will agree with them that *good and evil* is God's rule of law. Their mindset will also be demonstrated by their belligerent reaction towards those who do not agree with their belief system. They will even sanction violence as a method of punishment. Another way in which their theology and faith will be verified, is by their personal involvement in violence towards those they categorize as enemies, because these so called enemies are not in harmony with their thinking.

Believers and unbelievers in God will all alike reveal by their actions whether or not they are in agreement with Satan's law. Their minds will be sealed like those of the angels who accepted Lucifer's rule of law, and they will thereby seal their fate.

GOD MADE EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO ITS OWN KIND

During Creation Week

Satan has used numerous deceptions in his war against God, but the greatest weapon in his arsenal has been the portrayal of God as someone who has the character traits of his own principle of *good and evil*. In order to achieve his objectives, he portrays God as using violence, in particular towards reprobates. Thus he represents God as having the dual character traits of love and violent wrath.

Jesus' life clearly uncovered that lie when He befriended sinners, openly eating and drinking with them. There were no barriers to Jesus' love; He sought everyone regardless of rank, status, age, gender, or race. He yearned to touch every single person with His love, and hoped, as only *agape* love hopes, that everyone would come to know the Father as He really is, for in the true knowledge of God is hidden a treasure available to every human being. Jesus Christ alone is the One *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col. 2:3), and in his own words we read:

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3).

The Bible has given us foundational principles to govern our understanding and save us from the fundamental error of worshipping God as one who on one hand is infinite love, and on the other lashes out in vengeful, destructive wrath. The account we are given of Creation week reveals some of these basic principles regarding the character of God. Failure to understand and accept these cornerstone principles will most certainly cause us to worship a hybrid God.

God Created Everything According To Its Own Kind

The Genesis account of creation states and reiterates ten times within the span of fifteen verses that during creation week God created everything according to its kind. This phrase is used ten times in Genesis chapter one, verses eleven to twenty-five. The Hebrew word for 'kind' is *min*, and it always occurs in the singular form. All that God created according to its kind was a reflection of His identity. By bringing this aspect of creation to the forefront, something of fundamental importance is given to us.

The fact that God created everything according to its kind establishes the important principle that God did not create any part of creation as a hybrid. The *Cambridge Dictionary's* definition of hybrid is as follows: 'a hybrid is a plant or animal that has been produced from two different types of plant or animal, especially to get better characteristics, or anything that is a mixture of two very different things.' Perhaps 'different characteristics' would have been a better choice of words in the above definition, for can anyone improve on God's perfect Creation?

By creating a hybrid law, Satan supposed that he was improving God's law, which to all intents and purposes does appear so to the carnal mind. In reality, however, it leads to nothing but death and destruction.

No amalgamation in God's Creation

God did not mix any two different classifications in His Creation. Any subsequent disruption of this Creation model is an intrusion from Satan's domain and is a misrepresentation of God. Amalgamation is a foreign entity in God's perfect work of creating everything according to its kind. The intrusion of amalgamation, the disruption of God's established order in the earthly sphere, began to take place only after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

God Gave Commands To Keep Creation Pure From Hybrids

The statement that everything during creation week was created according to its kind is reinforced and taught in the Bible by means of various other commands against allowing any mixtures between kinds. These are a reminder that any form of hybridization represents a false view of God's character, because God does not have a hybrid character: He created everything according to its kind. God's own character therefore is according to its kind, being light only, having no darkness at all.

The first of these commands, warning against mixing, are found in the book of Leviticus:

You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you (Leviticus 19:19).

You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be

defiled (Deuteronomy 22:9).

You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together (Deuteronomy 22:10).

You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together (Deuteronomy 22:11).

What is God really trying to tell us in these verses? The clear and loud practical message given here is that God intended for all things to remain in the same pure state in which He created them. We were not to mix the genetic makeup of seeds, to alter the DNA of plants or animals, for God had already created all things to their maximum perfection, and by mixing it they became defiled. There was no more room for improvement in God's creation, and altering it in any way carried with it terrible destructive consequences. We may already be experiencing some of those consequences now, but we may never even know the full extent of the harm involved in disrupting the order of God's perfect creation.

The Spiritual Significance Of God's Commands

The spiritual importance of these commands is that they reveal a principle which emanates from God's very essence as the Creator, and which thus reveals to us the inner workings of His mind. These are therefore principles by which God Himself operates. The above verses quoted from Leviticus and Deuteronomy teach us that God is pure, that in Him there is no mixture whatsoever, and when we claim that His character is a mixture of destructive wrath and love, we in essence have defiled Him. The principles laid down in the above texts teach us that there is no duality in God's character, no mixture of light and darkness. If we worship God thinking that His character is a hybrid, He becomes defiled in our minds. He ceases to be, in our minds, the pure and

unadulterated God that He really is.

Do Not Mix Linen With Wool

Let's take one of the above commands and look at its spiritual implications. What could possibly be wrong with wearing clothing with a mixture of linen and wool? The Bible is very clear on this command, and if taken literally, all Christians should be adhering to this mandate. Yet, except for a few who are governed by orthodoxy, no one pays much attention to this directive, even though the Bible says it must be done. People run into terrible problems and do silly things when the reasons for such statements are not correctly understood. Unless we grasp the spiritual significance for such directives, we will miss its divine implications.

While it is true that mixing different species would bring terrible devastation to the earth, mixing linen with wool in our apparel has no genetic implications. But it was banned so that we will understand and remember the spiritual significance involved in this command. God's character must not be desecrated with a mixture of two radically different character traits; if we do, in our minds, God Himself will not be according to His own kind, which is *agape* love. *Agape* love can never be mixed with anything else. If an attempt is made to mingle *agape* love with even an infinitesimal amount of anything else, it will cease to be *agape* love. The principle of *agape* love is in harmony with the principle of *everything according to its kind*.

The Tree Of Good And Evil Was A Symbol Of Just Such A Hybrid

As we have seen, everything God had created in the Garden of Eden was perfect and according to its kind when it was given to Adam and Eve. If everything given to them was perfect, what about the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*? Was that tree created according to its kind? In a creation in which cows beget only cows, in which apple trees produce only apples, *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* stood out as an anomaly, as a foreign entity, and these red flags should immediately alert us that something is not quite right. Did God create a hybrid tree, an amalgamation which produced two types of fruit, one good and the other evil? Furthermore, did God give something evil to Adam and Eve in *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*? Had God done that He would have been the Creator of evil and sin. But if we allow ourselves to be guided by the principles revealed to us in the Bible, we will not be easily led astray:

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1: 16,17).

Both Trees Were Part Of God's Perfect Creation, But One Represented Satan's Hybrid System Of Good And Evil

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is clearly a representation, a symbol, of Satan's mixed principle. It is the embodiment of all that is promoted, propagated, and reflected from the domain of the adversary. The physical tree itself was part of God's perfect creation, and therefore it served only as a symbol of Satan's principle. Would God have created a contaminated tree in His pristine creation? Both trees were brought forth perfectly from the

ground, for this truth is confirmed by the following statements which affirm that everything God created according to its kind was good:

And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food (Genesis 2: 9).

Every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food (Genesis 1: 29).

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

It is obvious that if mixed seed or different kinds of seed are sown together, the fruit of this mixture will not be according to its kind and will be defiled:

You shall not sow your field with mixed seed (Leviticus 19:19).

You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of the vineyard be defiled (Deuteronomy 22:9).

We have done exactly that to God's character, promoting a God with this mixed duality. By doing so, we have maligned and defiled His character.

If, from a biblical point of view, we believe that God's character is comprised of a mixture of destructive wrath and love, and that he arbitrarily rewards and arbitrarily punishes, then for us, not only God's character has become defiled, but our own minds have become defiled. Consequently, our action and lives will also become defiled by this erroneous view of God. When this happens, we, God and the earth is robbed of a perfect, loving relationship with God and each other.

A God With A Hybrid Character Operates By Good And Evil

Most Christians believe in the God of violence and also claim that the God they worship does not have a dual personality. But if God utilizes violence as a punishment mechanism, then He defaults into having a hybrid character. Those who believe that God does punish cannot understand the paradoxical and contradictory duality in mixing love and wrath. They propose that God's use of violence to punish sinners is justified because in love He has to deal with evil in that way.

But the death of Jesus Christ on the cross negates this thinking by this one supreme truth: that God in His *agape* love died for the sins of the world and is not imputing our sins to us. What Jesus Christ demonstrated on the cross refutes that God needs to punish sinners. Jesus Christ paid the total penalty for the sins of the world on the cross; therefore He does not still need to punish sinners. The idea of punishment originated with Satan's law, and it is he who makes God appear as the One who punishes.

In God There Is No Mixture Of Agape And Good And Evil

All the references below exhibit the principle that there is no mixture in God's character:

How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him (1 Kings 18: 21).

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 12:33).

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things (Matthew 12:35).

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing, My brethren these

things ought not to be so. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh (James 3: 10, 9, 11, 12).

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth (Revelation 3: 15, 16).

An Evil And Adulterous Generation Refers To Those Who Perceive God's Character To Be A Mixture

An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here (Matthew 12:39-42).

Jesus' utterance, *an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it*, has a universal spiritual application. Jesus did not mean that every human being on planet earth was literally committing adultery. Of course not! The spiritual application of the word *adulterous* refers to a mixture of principles, an adulteration that is not in harmony with God and His rule of law. It means that humanity lives by a principle that is an adulteration of God's *agape* love, that humanity lives by Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and as such see God in the same light.

The evil and adulterous generation looked for a sign of worldly power and

might, of supremacy over the enemies, of force and violence; in other words, a sign from the principle of *good and evil*. Up until the Babylonian captivity, Israel had constantly committed adultery against God by following false gods. After the captivity they never again overtly worshipped pagan gods, but they now ascribed the character of those pagan gods to the Creator God. So in essence they were still worshipping a pagan god. But Jesus, who was the one greater than Solomon, did not show by His words and actions that God is a God of force and violence. Jesus mentioned, as the paramount sign about God, His lying in the tomb for three days after His crucifixion, thus graphically demonstrating a God of non-violence and *agape* love.

Jesus is pointing us to his upcoming death at the cross as the most revealing demonstration of who God really is. The demonstration could be given only from the principle of *agape* love: God giving His life for the world, and then God, the God of life only, resurrecting from death. Jesus' resurrection proved that *agape* love annihilated the principle of death, for death could not hold Him in the grave.

God Is Light With No Mixture Of Darkness

Ultimately, the greatest and easiest symbol God has given us in the attempt to teach us that there is no mixture at all in His character, is the symbol of light versus darkness.

The Bible says that God is light. In the Bible, the word light is symbolically used in reference to the nature and very essence of God. Darkness is the ultimate antithetical symbol to light, and this darkness is a symbol of the nature of Satan. The two can never be fused or mixed into one entity. Jesus made this claim Himself when He said that one cannot serve two masters:

No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24).

If there was an existing harmony between the two masters, light and darkness, we would be able to serve both together, but there is no harmony between them because they are irreconcilable. Any attempt to mix the two, even if an angel from heaven said so, cannot be done. Satan and his minions are the only beings who communicate that it is possible for such a mixture to take place, but this is an absolute lie, and it is given for the sole purpose of deceiving the human race.

The moral perfection of the nature of God's character is demonstrated in how He dealt with the sin problem by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The so-called justice, or punishment, that the law of *good and evil* demanded for sin was paid by Jesus on the cross. Instead of letting sinners receive the punishment Satan's law demanded, the Son of God took all the punishment for sins upon Himself when He died on the cross, and by doing so he lived out the principle of self-sacrificing agape love.

A careful examination of the following verses will reveal to whom the price of redemption was paid in the salvation of mankind:

The Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh [SATAN] king of Egypt (Deuteronomy 7:8c; emphasis added).

The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, 'Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand: That I will break the Assyrian [SATAN] in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back (Isaiah 14:24-27)?, emphasis added.

In these passages God is shown as redeeming us from the house of bondage and the hand of Pharaoh. Pharaoh is a symbol of Satan, and certainly not of God. Jesus removed the heavy yoke of Satan's rule of law from our shoulders, and gave us His yoke, which is easy and light:

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:29-30).

The World Believes God Is Punishing Us

Tragically the overwhelming majority of Christians believe that some of the most evil occurrences of destruction and death in the Bible, and even those occurring now, are acts of God. This depraved belief about God is what John the Apostle categorically refuted because he heard otherwise from Jesus Christ. This is *the* message John the apostle boldly declared that he heard from Him, Jesus Christ: God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).

The majority of the world erroneously believes that the tragedies which continuously befall humanity are an arbitrary punishment by God because of human sin. The cross absolutely denies this horrid depiction of God. The ultimate flawlessness of His nature means there is no impurity or mixture from the domain of *darkness* in His character. His nature is not such, and He could never be governed by the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

Second Corinthians chapter six, verse fourteen, clearly shows us that light and darkness have nothing in common and therefore have no relationship with each other: Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

Primarily, this verse is showing us a principle, commanding us not to mix two antithetical principles because in reality they can never be combined to become one. The fundamental application for this verse relates to God's and Satan's characters as being unmixable; it refers to the unbridgeable gap

that exists between God's principle represented by *the tree of life* and Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. It is speaking about the vast chasm that lies between God's rule of law of *agape* love and Satan's rule of law of *good and evil*, and ultimately it refers to the impossibility of mixing God, the Creator of a perfect Creation, and Satan, the destroyer of that perfect Creation.

The secondary application here given applies to human relationships, and is given as advice especially to those who are contemplating marriage. This principle discourages the union in marriage of someone who believes and lives by God's principle to one who is in opposition to such a belief, for such union may bring more pain than joy in the marriage relationship. Thus it establishes the fact that light and darkness have no communion in the human level. If light and darkness have no communion on the human level, would they possibly coexist in God Himself?

NO DARKNESS IN GOD

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1: 5).

The apostle John was given a very a distinct and precise message. The message that he and the other apostles of Jesus Christ had heard, they heard from none other than Jesus Christ Himself, who alone has ever had the absolute knowledge of the character of God. Because Jesus is the only Being in the universe who has ever had a perfect and faultless understanding of God, and because He loves us with an everlasting love, He chose to come to earth in order to share His knowledge of the Father, not only with the human race but also with the whole universe. Jesus at first gave this knowledge to His disciples, and now He is opening our understanding, at this particular time in the history of the earth, in order to give us the pure and undefiled revelation of God the Father. The message Jesus came to bring us is that there is no darkness at all in God.

What exactly did Jesus mean when He taught the disciples that God is light? What precisely did He mean when He said that in Him is no darkness at all? These are the questions this chapter will set out to answer.

God Is Light

It shall soon become apparent that the word 'light' is used interchangeably for the words 'love' and 'life' in John's message. Likewise, 'darkness' is equated to the words 'hate' and 'death.'

In his first epistle, the apostle John uses two words to describe God. The first is found in 1 John 1:5, *God is light*, and the other in 1 John 4:8, *God is love*. The words 'light' and 'love' are both used by John to describe the character of God. It is generally agreed that when John says that *God is love* he means to say that love is the essence of God's being. It is worth emphasizing that the apostle is not referring in a general way to one of God's attributes, which are a mere reflection of His essence, but he is specifically referring to the very essence of God, which is love. John did not say 'God has love,' but *God is love*.

The word 'light' has been used in the Bible in many different ways when referring to God but always with the foundational meaning that He is love and life. The word 'light' also refers to truth, but that truth always has to do with the character of God, which is love.

Light And Darkness

John himself defines the word 'light' and its opposite, 'darkness.' Through a progression of verses the meaning of those words will become very clear. The first set of verses are found in 1 John 1:6-7:

*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in **darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the **light** as He is in the light, we have **fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all sin (emphasis added).*

In the above verses John is basically saying that we may call ourselves Christians and say we love God, but if we walk in darkness then we are lying

not only to others, but to ourselves. Notice that by walking in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

The second passage that sheds light on this truth is a continuation of the first, 1 John 2:3-11:

*Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His **commandments**. He who says, "I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the **love** of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the **darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining**. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes (emphasis added).*

Here is clearly seen that 'light' is 'love', and 'darkness' is the opposite of love. So when the apostle John says that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all, he means to say that in God's love there is absolutely nothing that is a part of darkness.

Only Jesus Could Reveal God Because Jesus Is The Express Image Of The Father

Jesus Christ is the only Being in the universe who knows God absolutely and perfectly, and who has the ultimate insight about God and that is simply because He is the Creator God Himself. This truth is declared in the following passages:

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-4).

In this text is seen the absolute preeminence of Jesus Christ as the sole messenger through whom God has in these last days spoken to us. Jesus Christ, the heir of all things and the Creator of the worlds, is also the express image of God's being, the I AM. Christ is absolutely the express image of the Father. God made certain that by beholding Jesus Christ no one should go astray in regards to His character.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:18).

It is written in the Prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God;

He has seen the Father (John 6:45, 46).

No one has known God as He ought to be known except for Jesus Christ. Therefore, only Jesus Christ's testimony of the Father is full, complete and true.

To See God Is To Know Him

When Jesus uses the word 'seen,' He is really saying 'know.' In John 14:7 that meaning is made apparent:

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. All things are delivered unto Me of my Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither know any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him (Matthew 11:27).

So we see that it was Jesus Christ Himself, the only One with this ultimate knowledge of God, who told the apostle John that there is no darkness at all in God's essence. When John states that God is love, he means to say that not a trace of evil, which we will agree comes from Satan's domain of darkness, is in His love.

The World Believes God Is A Mixture Of Light And Darkness

The statement *no darkness at all* presupposes that an erroneous belief had prevailed in connection with God's essence and character. It implies that some semblance of this darkness had infiltrated the minds of the people regarding God. Therefore Jesus Christ is clearly informing the world that we have seriously erred in attributing some or any aspects of the kingdom of darkness to God's character.

Darkness is complete in itself, so that the words *at all*, when used in reference to the darkness, are a deliberate over-emphasis of this word for a very good reason. This *no darkness at all* unequivocally asserts that we are never to make the mistake of having any mixture in our view of God. In particular it is imperative that we do not attribute to His essence both light and darkness, or *good and evil*.

In John's declaration, Jesus was addressing a people who believed, from their study of the Bible, in a God whose character was tainted with darkness. But according to Jesus, darkness is the character trait of the evil one and not of the Holy One of the universe. This is the message that John heard from Jesus Christ and which Jesus Christ is now through John declaring to all of humanity.

Isaiah Prophesied That Jesus Would Shed Light On God's Character

Isaiah had prophesied that Jesus Christ, as the Light of the world, would correct these erroneous beliefs regarding the character of God:

And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: The land of Zebulun

*and the land of Naphtali by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles: **the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned** (Matthew 4:13–16; emphasis added).*

Notice that in this passage darkness is also equated with the shadow of death. Those who sat in the region and shadow of death were in darkness, and this darkness refers to their understanding of the character of God. The shadow of death is governed by the death principle of *good and evil*, it is darkness, and therefore it cannot be of God.

The phrases *have seen a great light* and *Light has dawned* are both references to Jesus Christ because He gave the revelation that darkness and shadow of death do not originate or belong to God's Kingdom, principle, domain, or character.

To know and understand that the above verses are referring to the character of God, we can read 2 Corinthians 4:6, which makes it very clear that the word *darkness* has to do with an incorrect knowledge of God's character:

*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the **knowledge of the glory of God** in the face of Jesus Christ (emphasis added).*

Again we must note that this passage presupposes that darkness was prevailing in the minds of the people regarding God, and in particular in the minds of those who were given the oracles of God, that is, the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ, specifically referring to Himself proclaimed:

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12).

Jesus Christ, as the light of life, removes the darkness that enshrouds the minds of the people. The glory of God is the essence of who He is and is reflected in the face of Jesus Christ, in the person of Jesus Christ, for as Jesus had said, *I and My Father are one (Jn.10:30)*. In John 9 Jesus comments on the blindness of the Pharisees, and His coming to open their eyes.

And Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.' Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, are we blind also?' Jesus said to them 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains (John 9:39-41).

The miracle of healing the man who was blind from birth was no doubt a merciful act to undo Satan's work. But it had greater significance for the Pharisees, the Jews and the whole human race.

Now as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world (John 9:1-5).'

When Jesus said that *neither this man sinned nor his parents*, He appears to be lying, does He not? After all, haven't we all sinned? So what is He really saying? The apostles asked, *who sinned that he was born blind?*, meaning, who sinned that caused this punishment to come upon him? Jesus denies that God

works by the law of arbitrary reward and punishment, and in effect states the principle that what Satan has meant for evil, God can turn around for good, and that is His glory.

By undoing Satan's works of destruction such as blindness, Jesus was revealing that it was not God who had caused those infirmities in the human body. The spiritual lesson involved here is also that we are all born blind from birth to the knowledge of God's character, and Jesus came to the earth to open our eyes and give us sight.

Zacharias' Prophecy Of John The Baptist's Witness Of Jesus

Zacharias prophesied in connection with the mission of his son, John the Baptist, who would be called the prophet of the Highest. He was sent to prepare the minds of the people to accept the Light, the Dayspring from on high, that is, Jesus Christ:

'And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest: For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace (Luke 1:76-79; emphasis added).

Speaking about John the Baptist, the apostle John writes in his gospel:

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world (John 1: 6-9; emphasis added).

When John stated that Jesus Christ is the **true Light** which gives light to every man coming into the world, he also implied that a false light was being given by someone else, someone who is an antagonist of Jesus Christ.

God Is The Source Of Life, Not Death

From the time Adam and Eve sinned, the world has experienced death. From the above passages we learned that death is the ultimate darkness, but we may be certain and be assured that whatever is the source of death, God is not in it. Not only is God not the source of death, but neither does He sanction, promote, or participate in anything that promotes death.

God is the source of life, and as such His natural work is in giving life. We may therefore conclude that all death that has been imposed and administered on humanity is not from God, but from God's adversary and his followers. Isaiah speaks of Lucifer as follows:

Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?' You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evil doers shall never be named (Isaiah 14:16, 17, 20).

The gospel of John is filled with passages that highlight that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is life:

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:4),

For as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have

life in Himself (John 5:26),

For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world (John 6:33),

I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12),

And I know that His [God's] command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told me, so I speak (John 12:50).

With such precise evidence that God is life, the source of life, and that He wants to give life to the world, the following words convey even more precisely that only through Jesus will this knowledge be acquired:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father except through me, (John 14:6),

Jesus Christ unequivocally claimed that He alone has the ultimate knowledge of the Father's character, which means no one else possesses this understanding in its absoluteness. Therefore, He alone can impart this knowledge to others.

*And this is life eternal, **that they might know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3; emphasis added).*

God sent Jesus to show the world that God is life, and nothing but life. How can we know with certainty that death is not an act of God? God told us that He will resurrect all those that have fallen prey to death, which is Satan's ultimate

act of violence. Jesus makes this claim and pronounces that He is the source of giving life to everyone.

The Sadducees And The Resurrection

The Sadducees had the notion that there is no such thing as the resurrection of the dead. In the context of a discussion He had with them, Jesus taught His audience about death and life. Before looking at what transpired in this exchange, a few questions should be pondered: who is the source of death and who is the source of life? And does Jesus think it is important to understand that there is without a doubt a resurrection from death?

We can apply this discussion of Jesus with the Sadducees as if He were addressing those of us who do not believe that God, as the Creator, is only the source of life, and not the source of death:

Jesus answered and said to them, 'Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God' (Mark 12:24)?

Jesus is in effect charging them with possessing gross ignorance of the Scriptures, and says to them that they are worshipping the god of destruction, who is responsible for death, and not worshipping the Creator God of the universe, who is responsible for life.

But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken (Mark 12:26-27).'

In effect Jesus is here saying that for God, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not really dead for the sole reason that, as the giver of life it will only be a matter of time before He will give them life again. From God's standpoint, the giving of life to those who have died is a fait accompli. Even if their death came from the domain of Satan, to God they might as well be alive, and it is only a matter of time until He resurrects them; therefore He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.

Only God Is Immortal

God and Jesus are the source of life because immortality is found only in Them. They only are immortal; therefore They only can give life to whomsoever They will.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen (1 Timothy 1:17).

*I urge you in the sight of **God who gives life to all things**, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, **who alone has immortality**, dwelling in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:13-16; emphasis added).*

God is not the God of the dead, the God responsible for all the death that has occurred and will yet occur. Death stems solely from Satan's domain. But God is *the God* of the living, the life-giving and sustaining God, against whom death has no power. Satan and sin are completely responsible for all death. In fact, the Bible tells us that death is the enemy of God:

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26).

God Will Bring All Back To Life

Because God is the source of life, all those who have fallen prey to Satan's death principle will eventually be resurrected by God:

Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do: for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does: and He will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son: that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, He who hears my word, and believes in Him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God: and those that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this: for the hour is coming, in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:19–29).

Jesus clearly shows that all humans will be resurrected, and the choices they

have made in this lifetime toward accepting or rejecting life from God will determine whether they will have eternal life or go into eternal condemnation, as God ultimately respects our freedom of choice.

The Resurrection And The Translation Group

The preponderance of the evidence points to Satan and his emissaries as having been entirely responsible for all the deaths that have ever occurred on earth.

God's resurrection of all those that have died due to Satan's rule of law proves that God is not the One who does the killing. As shown in the text above in the words of Jesus Himself, the resurrection will occur in two phases, the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation. Here we see that God will bring to life both the righteous and the unrighteous, but each one in his own order.

There is yet a third group of people that are brought to light in the Scriptures, a group upon whom death will no longer have its hold. Carefully study the following words of Jesus:

*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever **lives** and **believes** in Me shall **never die** (John 11: 25-26; emphasis added).*

In the above passage Jesus is referring to two groups of people—those who believe and 'die' and those who live, believe and 'shall never die.' The first group is made up of those who throughout the ages have believed in God and yet have died. These will be resurrected at the second coming, at the resurrection of the righteous, the resurrection of life.

The second group is made up of those who will be alive and who will believe and yet shall never die. This second group is obviously referring to a group of people who will **never** see death, a group that will be translated without seeing

death, for they shall never die. This is addressed in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remaining shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

No man, aside from Enoch and Elijah, has lived on this earth without experiencing death. Of Enoch, we read in Hebrews 11:5:

By faith Enoch was taken away (KJV: TRANSLATED) so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him [TRANSLATED HIM], for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God (emphasis added).

Enoch lived, believed, and never saw death. Thus Enoch is a type of the believers in the last generation who will never taste death.

The Translation Group

It is important that we grasp the significance of this second group. Why is it that they shall never die? The answer is partially because they will be alive at Jesus' second coming, which means they will belong to the final generation. But is it simply because they happen to have been born in the last generation, and are therefore the lucky subjects of perfect timing?

Or is it perhaps the fact that what they believe and demonstrate in their lives is so powerful that even death has no dominion over them? Listen to the words

of the prophet Isaiah, words that, if taken seriously, have a meaning beyond anything any one has heard or seen:

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (Isaiah 43:1-3).

And again, David says in Psalm 91:

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence, He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste the noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands shall they bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will

deliver him; he shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.

Protection Is Found In The Truth, In The Ways Of God

Notice that it is God's truth that is our shield and buckler. This truth to which we were previously blind is the light about the character of God revealed to us by Jesus Christ. Truth about God is scattered all over the Scriptures, hidden, as it were, in a field. It is there for our finding through Jesus Christ alone.

I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, who trust in carved images, who say to the molded images, 'You are our gods' (Isaiah 42:16, 17).

In our previously skewed understanding of God's character, we believed that He is violent. This is equivalent to trusting *in carved images* to which we say 'You are our gods.' Worshippers who bow before images are often found bringing gifts to appease their god's anger. Christians who believe that God is a destroyer are no different. But all that is now removed through Jesus Christ.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Jesus Revealed The Living God

Once we have received *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* then the following passage from the apostle Paul should also be heeded:

*Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but **has now been revealed** by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has **abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**, to which I was appointed a preacher, and apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles (2 Timothy 1:8–11; emphasis added).*

From these verses we see that this gospel, which is according to the power of God, that is, the power of life from the living God, was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. It already existed in God from before time began, and it has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior.

We Were Promised Life From Before The Creation Of The World

We may ask the question: when did time begin? For us, time began at the creation of this earth, when God created the earth in the context of time, in the time period of six days ending with His resting on the seventh-day. Before creation, God had already purposed that we should have life. Jesus came that *we may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly (John 10:10)*. God always intended for us to have life.

The Unbelieving Will Not Be Protected Because They Have Chosen To Believe A Lie

Psalm 91 has tremendous import for the final generation. It states that he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High will be able to live and survive through deadly and devastating situations, that these calamities will not affect them. The Psalm also brings to light another group of people when it states *only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked.*

The Bible itself gives us the definition of the wicked:

*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the **living** God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said, 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.' For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? **So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief** (Hebrews 3:12-19; emphasis added).*

The Evil Heart Of Unbelief

All who reject the truth that God's essence is *agape* love and that He therefore has no violence in Him have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Because they have departed from the truth about the character of the living God, the unfortunate but inevitable result is that they have chosen to have an evil heart of unbelief.

People living in the final generation who will witness the second coming of Jesus Christ and who have an evil heart of unbelief cannot enter and become a part of the group of believers who will be translated for the simple reason that the choices they have made prevent them from entering into the heavenly Promised Land. They have rejected the truth about the character of the God of *agape* love; they have rejected that He is nonviolent. There is also another reason they will not enter, which is really the outgrowth, or the consequence of what they have chosen to believe: and that is the manner in which they live. In our own lives we each reflect that which we believe, and those who have an evil heart of unbelief will use violence when confronted by evil because they believe in violence. They believe in violence because they perceive God to be violent, and they will do the same things they perceive their God is doing.

The Experience Of Those Who Believe In The God Of Love

The Bible clearly portrays two groups of people at the end time having two different views of God's character. Both groups will witness the Second Advent of Jesus Christ but each will have a distinct and opposite reaction to that event. One group will have a flawless understanding of God's character and their experience is portrayed like this:

And it will be said in that day: Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation (Isaiah 25: 9).

The Experience Of Those Who Believe In The God Of Violence

The other group will believe that God is a violent and punishing Being, and with this erroneous paradigm will view Him as the one who is out to kill them:

Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand" (Revelation 6:14-17)?

Notice how a Lamb can produce such fear. Lambs, more than any other animal, should not elicit abject fear, but these people would rather the rocks and mountains crush them than face the Lamb. Why? Because they think the Lamb is coming to punish them. Having failed to accept *agape* love as the law for their lives, they judge God by their own mindset.

The Two Groups' Reaction At The Second Coming Of Jesus

Notice in the following verses the same two groups and the reasons why they react the way they do:

*...and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on **those who do not know God**, and on those who **do not***

obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes in that day, to be glorified in His saints and to **be admired among all those who believe**, because our testimony among you was believed (2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; emphasis added).

The first group here mentioned is made up of those, again, who have an evil heart of unbelief in the living God. They are those who do not know God as a God of *agape* love, and who show in their lives that they believe in a god of violence, for they do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the gospel of peace. According to their belief they therefore perceive that God is coming to destroy them.

The second group are those who believe and who cannot wait to admire their Lord, Friend, and Savior. They have opened their hearts to the testimony found in the Scriptures, and now believe in the God who is not an enemy, but a friend.

Unbelievers In The God Of agape Love Are Treasuring Up The ‘Wrath’ Which Comes From The Principle Of Good And Evil

But in accordance with your hardness and impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to **each one according to his deeds**: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; **but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness** – indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of men who does evil, of the Jews first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also

to the Greek (Romans 2:5-10; emphasis added).

The righteous judgment of God occurs when God gives us up to our final decision not to live by *agape* love but by the law of *good and evil*. This is His wrath in the day of wrath, to release us completely to our choice. When this happens, His grace is totally rejected. Our final choice will be *without mixture* (Revelation 14:10) of God's grace, which is all that has kept us safe from experiencing the full brunt of Satan's destructive work on us.

Here again are portrayed two groups of people: those who patiently continue to live by the principle of *agape* love, and those who obey unrighteousness, which is the principle of *good and evil*. The first group knows that God has given them eternal life and has no condemnation toward them.

The evidence that the second group does not operate by *agape* love is that they are self-seeking, and all their actions are done in reference to themselves and not others. Even the love they have is tainted, for it springs from the 'good' of *good and evil*. This group will suffer the greatest condemnation and wrath conceivable, since they did not believe in the forgiveness and unconditional character of God's love. The principle of *good and evil* will crush them by its condemnation, and they will pass through unthinkable tribulation and anguish. The only way we may get a glimpse of the horror of their pain is by looking at Jesus' experience as He went to the cross. Jesus shed drops of blood mixed with sweat and eventually His heart burst in the agony of His perceived forsaken condition. Here is the reason to preach the good news, so that no one may have to experience such needless pain!

This End Time Issue Will Encompass All Of Humanity

In the following passage in Romans we can easily see that it is our choices that determine our fate. Either we will have God's rule of law of *agape* love in our hearts, or Satan's law of *good and evil*. The consequences we will experience are inherent in the choices we make. It is also clearly explained below that this issue is affecting all of humanity. Some live God's law of *agape* love without specifically having been taught the oracles of God. Others, who even though

they have been taught the oracles of God, do not live according to it. Therefore each one of us will eventually be seen for who we really are on that day when God will judge the secrets of men, that is, the inner heart of every man:

*For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; **for when gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts,** their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel (Romans 2:11-16; emphasis added).*

The choice each one of us makes at this critical juncture in humanity's history, irrespective of whether we believe in God or not, will seal our fate whether for weal or for woe. It is in this context that the apostle Paul makes the above statement in regard to those who do not believe in God, but whose actions reveal what is written in their hearts.

All Humanity Has Been Objectively Justified And When They Believe, They Are Subjectively Justified By Faith

Our objective justification is accomplished by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. This justification was done for the entire human race. Whether we want this gift or not is irrelevant: it is ours, it was freely given to all of us. It is our entitlement to spend eternity with the God of the universe. This is the revelation of God's *agape* love.

We must then ask the question: Does humanity play any part whatsoever

in the objective justification which Jesus Christ has completed and which the entire sinful human race has received? The answer is absolutely not. Our justification comes solely from God. Humanity has not contributed anything whatsoever in the finished work of Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross. This fact is confirmed in the passage found in Ephesians 2:4-7:

*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus (emphasis added).***

We have been conditioned to believe that we must have some important part to play in our unconditional justification by God when in fact God has made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, apart from any works we may have done. The result of our misguided mindset has caused us to disbelieve the truth that our salvation is all God's work and none of ours.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

What happens when we, by faith, come to know and believe that this *agape* love of God that was demonstrated by Jesus Christ on the cross unconditionally treats us as if we had never sinned?

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10).

When properly understood, God's love will subjectively move us to such an extent that we will choose to be justified by faith. Then we will have voluntarily chosen to believe and accept His gift of salvation. It is because we have been so moved internally by His unconditional *agape* love that we are justified by faith. Now it is our suitability and right to spend eternity with God.

If we, and again it must be stressed that we are talking about the entire sinful human race, are already sitting together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus why should we even bother to choose to believe this truth? It is already a done deal, is it not? Even though eternal life is already ours, God in His *agape* love will never force us to live with Him for eternity. The final decision will be left with us.

God Does Not Use Violence To Punish His Enemies And Neither Will We, Once We Know The Truth About Him

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:1,2).

The power of God's *agape* love in us will impact us to such an extent that we will, like God, who through Jesus Christ gave its supreme demonstration, do the same. We will love even our enemies. We will *not* love even our own lives to

the death (Revelation 12:11), nor use violence towards our enemies.

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:7, 10).

This precludes any belief that God uses violence to punish His enemies. It must be definitely understood that we are the ones that are at enmity with God, and not vice versa. According to the apostle Paul, if our minds are at enmity against God, then we are in the death domain. As such, we will not be living by the law of God, and this life cannot please God. To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:6-8).

We Need To Be Reconciled To God Because God Is Already Reconciled To Us

From God's ultimate revelation of Himself on the cross we know that, when we were yet enemies, He did not violently destroy us because we looked at Him as our enemy. On the contrary, through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross we were reconciled to God even when we were still enemies in our minds towards Him.

Only by beholding what was demonstrated by Jesus Christ on the cross can we come to the realization of the depth of God's *agape* love for us. Once we grasp

the significance of what was authenticated on the cross, we will completely cease to believe the lies which Satan and those controlled by his principles have caused us to believe about God. This will in no uncertain terms make us aware that God is already reconciled to us and longs for us to be reconciled to Him.

Some Believe That Jesus Is A Shield Between Us And God

There is a significant error prevailing within Christianity. Most Christians believe that the cross event propitiated the wrath of God towards the sinful human race. In other words, there is an erroneous belief that Jesus needs to plead to the Father on behalf of sinners in order to prevent Him from unleashing His wrath on them. It is believed that it is this intercessory work that reconciles God to the sinners, a reconciliation that takes place only at Jesus' request. Thus it is portrayed that God is reconciled to us by Jesus' advocacy and that is why He does not kill us for our sins.

The truth however, as previously stated, is that we are the ones who need to be reconciled to God in our minds, and that chiefly because of what Satan has caused us to believe about God, and not because God has given us any reason to think that way. The erroneous belief that God is an enemy out to destroy us, and that Jesus Christ diverts the Father's destructive behavior by taking upon Himself the force of that destruction by dying on the cross is not what Jesus Christ revealed.

God Has Always Been Reconciled To Us

We can be reconciled to God only when we are delivered from the erroneous understanding of His character, which Satan had instilled in our minds, a deliverance that only Jesus Christ can provide. Even though God is already reconciled to us, once we are reconciled to Him, He will be reconciled to us. We must keep in mind that God is already reconciled to us.

Satan's lies about God are unmasked when we acknowledge God's *agape* love and no longer believe Satan's lies about Him. God's heart moves with overwhelming joy when we know the truth about Him. Any human father would experience the same thing if his children, who were once lied to about him, came to know the truth.

The Cross Demonstrated The Fullness Of God's Love

The death of Jesus on the cross demonstrated all the fullness of God's essence of *agape* love. Not until the cross, when the ultimate revelation of God's character was demonstrated by Jesus Christ, did God use an event to reveal His attitude towards us. Once again it is clearly stated that God was not the one that needed to be reconciled to us, but we to Him.

For it pleased the Father that in Him [Jesus Christ] all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight (Colossians 1:19-22).

God Does Not Impute Our Trespasses To Us

The spirit of reconciliation is inherent in the essence of God's *agape* love, and is always in effect, even without the recipients being aware of this truth. God attempts to reconcile us to Himself by letting us know the important truth that He is not imputing our trespasses to us. From His position He is not placing our sins on us, and that is the proof that He is already reconciled to us.

In order for all to be receptive either positively or negatively to this effected reconciliation of God, they first need to be made aware of this actuality. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross demonstrates this verity, and God has given us a great privilege: that of being ambassadors for Christ and making this fact known to others.

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

To believe that God is at enmity with us, that He is imputing our trespasses on us, and that He is the one that needs to be reconciled to us, unequivocally denies the essence of His being. All false beliefs about God promote the heinous lie that He is at enmity with us and that He needs to be reconciled to us.

God's Principle Gives Life

God did not violently punish us for being His enemies; on the contrary, through what Jesus Christ demonstrated on the cross, we were given life. We shall be saved from the death principle, by His life-giving principle, when by faith, we no longer kill our enemies. We will thus demonstrate what God has asked us to do, and which Jesus Christ has already done. Jesus did not love His life to the death, but rather gave up His life so that we may have life. He did this even while we were still at enmity with God.

This will unquestionably be revealed by the final generation of earth's

history, by those who will not experience death but will be translated:

He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it (Matthew 10:39).

Those who try to save their lives by killing their enemies will lose it to the first death of sleep, and to the second, or eternal, death. Jesus revealed what will happen to those who are prepared to obey Him when He said he who loses his life for My sake will find it. All who, like Jesus, are prepared to live by God's *agape* love principle and who would rather die than kill their enemies will find life, and will not experience death but will be translated. Historically there have been many who willingly gave their lives rather than kill their enemies. Why will the last generation be different from those martyrs? This last generation will know that God is only a Creator and not a destroyer, and will give up their lives with that mindset, which was never done previously.

Our subjective justification, which is by faith, will reveal whether we are living by God's *agape* love. Choosing to live by God's principle of *agape* love becomes our fitness for heaven and we will continue to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is the only way we participate in what God, in Jesus Christ, completed for humanity.

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

It Is Difficult To Believe That God Is Impartial Irrespective Of The Situation

For there is no partiality with God(Romans 2:11) means that the issue in the final generation, just before the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, is not whether we profess to believe in God or not. According to Paul, God has already objectively justified the whole human race as evidenced in what was stated above and what is stated by the verses below:

For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:22-24).

The apostle Paul is making it obvious that without exception whatsoever, universally, all have sinned and all have fallen short of the glory of God. This encompasses every human being.

God has completely reversed humanity's condition, and He did it without any human participation whatsoever. We are all justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This proclamation has direct application to every human being who, in Adam, was in an unjustified condition.

Therefore, as through one man's offense [ADAM] judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous (Romans 5:18, 19); emphasis added.

In Adam the entire human race was in a sinful state, that is, in an unjustified condition. For all have sinned in Adam means that we were

already unforgiving and therefore unforgivable sinners in Adam even before we were born. In Christ Jesus however, even before we were born, we all were justified freely. That means that, in the second Adam, Christ Jesus, we are forgiven and treated as if we had never sinned. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45).

*But to him who **does not work** but **believes on Him who justifies the ungodly**, his **faith** is accounted for righteousness (Romans 4:5; emphasis added).*

In the above verse, it is clearly stated that the faith that is accounted for righteousness is the subjective faith of him who believes in the God who objectively and universally justifies the ungodly. Since the whole of humanity is ungodly, we have all been justified objectively, and when we believe this fact then our subjective faith is accounted for righteousness. This is how even atheists and gentiles, who show the law written in their hearts, are justified objectively, and their subjective justification by faith will show itself in how they treat others. If they treat others, especially their enemies, with God's *agape* love, they demonstrate by their actions that they are subjectively justified by faith. Most atheists have consciously rejected God's existence because of the portrayal of a God of violence. By rejecting such a god, they are in effect accepting the true God.

Those Who Believe About Their Objective Justification Are Blessed

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin (Romans 4:7, 8).

The above passage reveals that there is a special blessing for those that know that their lawless deeds are forgiven, that their sins are covered and that the Lord does not impute sin on them. This blessing that comes with the knowledge of God's unconditional forgiveness manifests itself in the fact that those who have it are able to treat their enemies with *agape* love, and they therefore have a life of peace, following in the footsteps of the *Prince of Peace* (Isaiah 9:6).

Our Actions And Reaction Are Evidence Of Our Choice Between *agape* Love And Good And Evil

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life...Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life (Romans 5:6, 8, 10, 18).

Since all of us have been freely forgiven as if we had never sinned, the deciding

factor for humanity will be cogently demonstrated in our lives by how we react to evil in others. This will be a universal and all-inclusive demonstration by humanity. It will be seen through our actions and reactions, and in particular by our reactions to satanic deeds perpetrated against us by others, whether God's law is written in our hearts or not. Our use of either violence or nonviolence in response to depraved activities by others will reveal whether the principle of *good and evil* or God's law of *agape* love is written in our hearts. The individual choice between violence and nonviolence will decidedly differentiate between Satan's followers and God's followers.

We may even adamantly believe and profess that there is no God; but how we react to actual or perceived evil confronting us will indicate whether we know God or not: *For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified (Romans 2:13)*. These doers of the law may even be atheists, but they will be justified by faith. One may ask how can atheists possibly be just in the sight of God and be justified by faith when they do not even believe in Him? Unbeknown to them they will be living out God's nonviolent character of *agape* love, and as such, they are just in the sight of God by faith.

Professed Christians Who Choose Good And Evil Are Not Justified By Faith In The Sight Of God, So Subjectively, They Are Not Justified

Conversely, those who claim to know God but whose actions deny His *agape* love principle of nonviolence are not justified by faith in the sight of God. Even though they claim to be followers of God they are not just in the sight of God subjectively because their actions reveal they are the followers of Satan. But the doers of the law of *agape* love will be justified by faith. The doers of the law can include believers and unbelievers in God because they have *faith working through love* (Galatians 5:6). Their actions reveal that they have faith by living out God's nonviolent *agape* love.

Faith, Hope And Love, And The Greatest Is The Latter

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:18).

For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love (Galatians 5:5, 6).

Both faith and hope find their fulfillment in *agape* love. In and of themselves

they do not reach their ultimate realization. Faith and hope are consummated with *agape* love, according to the apostle Paul. Faith and hope work through love. It is when faith and hope work through *agape* love, that they reach the pinnacle of perfection.

*And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though **I have all faith**, so that I could remove mountains, but have **not love**, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2; emphasis added).*

If faith is not working through love, it is nothing.

***Love**...does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, **hopes all things**, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:4, 6; emphasis added).*

Faith is the substance or the evidence that we have hope and are waiting to see things not yet seen, those things which are as of yet just a hope. Faith and hope are merely tools through which we may grasp the evidence of God's love, which is not yet seen in a world that is run by *good and evil*. *Things hoped for* is God's *agape* love lived out in the midst of sin and evil; *things hoped for* is a world where love and peace reigns. *Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10)* is the cry of every heart that is yearning for God's rule of law of *agape* love to prevail in our ailing world.

When Hebrews 11:1 states that *faith is the evidence of things not seen* it is not speaking of physical sight. The spiritual meaning of this passage becomes evident when we read John's words regarding Jesus in John 1:18. He says that *no one had seen God at anytime*, that is, no one has *declared* the character of the Father as Jesus has. What no one has seen and only Jesus has declared is

the character of God. It is His essence of *agape* love. Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, came from the bosom of the Father. The bosom of the Father means that He has the same character as the Father. Jesus did not declare even one word regarding God's physical appearance, so John is not talking about seeing God in a physical sense. But He declared His character by His own life: *he who has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9)*.

Our Behavior Reveals Whether We Know The Truth About God Or Not

For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law (Romans 2:12), applies to all who have been oblivious about Jesus Christ's special revelation about God's law of *agape* love. How are they ignorant about God's law of *agape* love? Their actions of violence will reveal who they are and they have sinned without law. Therefore they will also perish without law.

When Gentiles, who do not have the law (Romans 2:14), refers to the people who do not know God's law of *agape* love of nonviolence as revealed by Jesus Christ. Though they do not have this particular knowledge about God's character, these people by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts. All their activities are a demonstration that God's law of *agape* love is written in their hearts. Particular emphasis is placed on their reaction to evil. The pacifist principle of God, His *agape* love, will show the works of the law written in their hearts.

All believers in God through Jesus Christ who have sinned in the law are those who have lived contrary to God's law of *agape* love. These have sanctioned or resorted to violence and will be judged by the law of *agape* love which is the law of nonviolence. Revelation 21:8 lists the people who will take part in the lake of fire – and it would seem that there are a lot of non-violent people there: cowards (fearful), unbelievers, fornicators, idolaters and liars.

But violence is the act of violating another person's life in one way or another. So cowards, for instance, would rather kill than die themselves, unbelievers in

the God of love are by definition believers in violence, and the same principle applies likewise to all who are listed in that verse.

Practice Of God's Righteousness Reveals His True Followers

John declares that righteousness may be found in the hearts of everyone who practices God's principle of *agape* love, which is His righteousness. Here is emphasized that just believing in the true character of God is not sufficient. *Agape* love is the righteousness of God in which there is no violence whatsoever towards anyone, friend or foe. One must put love into practice:

*And now little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. **If you know that He is righteous you know that everyone that practices righteousness is born of Him** (1 John 2:28-29; emphasis added).*

If you know that He, God, is righteous, you will know that in Him there is no violence whatsoever. With this understanding of God's character then, with this knowledge of God, everyone who practices righteousness, who is nonviolent towards friends or foes alike – even if such friends and foes are liars, fornicators, etc... – is born of God. *Everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him*, therefore they undoubtedly are confirmed peacemakers because they are in conformity with Jesus' teaching.

People of nonviolence are peacemakers and are the ones that Jesus identifies as the children of God. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9)*. Jesus Christ unambiguously declares that these *peacemakers*, identified as the children of God, have their Father's character of nonviolence.

To make sure that there is no misunderstanding in this connection, we

need to keep in mind that only a Divine Being who knew God perfectly could teach such a radical truth. There is not one instance where violence can be legitimately justified by God and humanity alike. Jesus leaves no room for any perverted misinterpretation of the same by stating:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God...But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust...Therefore be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:9, 44, 45, and 48).

Verse 48 indicates that those who treat their enemies as God treats His, are perfect just as their Father in heaven is perfect.

Because Jesus knows God like no one else does, He had the authority to state that violence will not be an option for all who shall be called the children of God, because their Father in heaven, God Himself, is nonviolent.

Jesus could have qualified His Sermon on the Mount by agreeing with what His hearers had understood about the God of the Old Testament, depicting a God who either commanded or personally killed His enemies. He could have stated 'love your enemies, but with one exception...' He could have told them to treat their enemies in the same way they understood God to have done in the Old Testament. By His claim of being one with the Father, by the authority that position gives Him, Jesus renounced the previous sacrilegious understanding of God. With that mandate He certified that His knowledge of the Father is the ultimate truth compared to whatever had been stated or whatever will be stated that is contrary to it. That includes their misunderstanding of what had been stated. He categorically refutes their skewed belief, thus negating their erroneous understanding of God's character by stating the truth about God.

The Final Victory Over Death Is Not An Arbitrary Act Of God But The Victory Of agape Love Over The Principle Of Good And Evil

*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this **corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality** then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O death, where is your sting? O hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:50–58; emphasis added).*

In the above passage we see that *corruption* refers to the word mortal, and *incorruption* to immortality. Flesh and blood and corruption cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can incorruption inherit immortality. Flesh and blood and corruption are all part of Satan’s death principle of *good and evil*, and incorruption is only possible by God’s principle of *agape* love. Jesus Christ lived solely by the principle of *agape* love, and just before going to the cross He made this clear:

*And now I have told you before it comes [THE CROSS], that when it does come to pass, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, **for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.** But*

that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here (John 14:29–31; emphasis added).

Speaking about Jesus the Psalmist says:

I will bless the Lord who has given me council; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope, for you will not leave my soul in Sheol (the grave) nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life: in your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:7–11).

Jesus did not see corruption because He followed the path of life that His Father showed Him *in the night seasons*, that is, in a world filled with Satan's work of darkness; even while surrounded by Satan's kingdom, He was unmoved from the path of God.

We also must live in the path of life, the path of blessings, and must let go of the principle of *good and evil* in order to put on incorruption and enter into the kingdom of God.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:6–7).

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by

the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:12-14).

Peter's Sermon At Pentecost

Through Peter's straightforward testimony we learn that death had no hold on Jesus for God had made known to Him the ways of life:

*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know – Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death; whom God raised up, **having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.** For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. **You have made known to me the ways of life;** You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'" (Acts 2:22-28; emphasis added)*

What Are The Ways Of Life?

The apostle John gives us the answer in a very clear and simple way, so that none may be confused and led astray:

*Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. **We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.** He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:13-15; emphasis added).*

Jesus Christ learned the ways of life from the Father and in turn has made it known to us also, by His life, teachings and death. Just as death no more has dominion over Him, so shall it also have no more dominion over us if we obey the ways of life:

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life**” [NO LONGER VIOLENT]. “**For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,** knowing this, that our old man” [OF VIOLENCE] “was crucified with Him, that the body of sin [GOOD AND EVIL] might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died [TO GOOD AND EVIL] has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. **Death no longer has dominion over Him.** For the death that He died, He died to sin [GOOD AND EVIL] once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. **Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin [GOOD AND EVIL], but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord** (Romans 6:3-11; emphasis added).*

Speaking to the men of Israel Paul says:

Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him, And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death (Acts 13:26-28).

Those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, were given, through Jesus, the opportunity to know that the God they were supposed to worship was a God of *agape* love, a God who had no violence in Him. They rejected this knowledge from Jesus Christ because they wanted to worship the God of violence. Accordingly they murdered the Prince of nonviolence and fulfilled in their lives what they believed God would do to anyone who did not conform to their belief system.

Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings – that promise which was to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’ and that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David. Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption (Acts 13:29-37).

Jesus Christ was sinless, which means that He kept the law of *agape* love perfectly; therefore He experienced the resurrection. He did not remain in the domain of death and corruption because He did not live *by the sword*. If He had, then His proclamation that *all who take the sword will perish by the sword* would have been His lot also.

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you (Acts 13:38-41).'

Paul entreats his hearers to believe in the unbelievable, which was the message of Jesus Christ concerning His life-giving Father, and the fact that death has no power over the *agape* principle. This message is also meant for us who are living at this time in the history of the world. The Bible indicates that we also may conquer death through Jesus Christ and His principle of *agape* love, and this is in fact something that needs to happen in order for the polemic regarding the two laws in question to come to an end.

Sleep And The First Death Are Synonymous Terms

Writing to the Thessalonians Paul says the following about *death*:

*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have **fallen asleep**, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him*

those who through Jesus **sleep**. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are **asleep**. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words (1Thessalonians 4:13–18; emphasis added).

Here are clearly depicted the two groups mentioned earlier, those who believe and die, and those who live, believe and never die. The Scriptures tell us that we shall not all sleep. In this particular context, sleep refers to the first death; thus, what that really means is that we shall not all die. At the end-time there will be a group of people that will not experience death, and they will be translated. They will not experience the ultimate result of Satan's death principle but will remain alive till the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. They will be conveyed alive from the earth and will meet Jesus Christ in the air:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law [OF GOOD AND EVIL] (1 Corinthians 15:50–56; emphasis added).

Who will be changed – *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet?* Those who will be alive then and living by the principle of *agape* love will be changed. They will be set free from all of the effects they have experienced from Satan's principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, which has affected them even to its minutia. Everything that was caused by Satan and sin, and the effects of sin that were inflicted on them will finally come to an end, and they will be set free from the fallout of Satan's principle.

Paul speaks of this incredible event as something that all creation is eagerly awaiting for:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the Sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:18–21).

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).

Death Will Cease To Exist In The Universe

God opens to us the window of the future in the book of Hosea, and shows us the time when death will be destroyed, when He will give us freedom from death:

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from

*death. O death, I will be your plagues! O grave, I will be your destruction!
Pity is hidden from my eyes (Hosea 13: 14).*

God has eagerly awaited for death to cease to exist. This is confirmed by the passage in 1 Corinthians 15:26, which states that *the last enemy that will be destroyed is death*.

Hosea's text also refers to that day when the hearts of men will be forever consolidated into what they have chosen and from which there is no more moving. This is the day of the wrath of God, the day God completely releases us to our choices, the day when pity is hidden from His eyes.

God's pain at letting go His beloved children can be felt in Jesus' bemoan over the fate of Jerusalem:

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!
See! Your house is left to you desolate (Matthew 23:37, 38).*

Exodus From Egypt To Canaan Is A Type Pointing To A Greater Event

God has used all of the events of the Exodus from Egypt to Canaan as examples for us *upon whom the ends of the ages have come*, that is, for us who are living at the end of time, the final generation. It is unimaginable that in this connection all that was written, was written for our admonition. These things were written for a people who will play a pivotal role in informing the world regarding the truth about God's character; additionally, they will be living these truths in their personal lives. We learn this from 1 Corinthians 10:11:

*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were **written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come [emphasis added].*

We read previously in the passage from Hebrews 3:12-19, that the children of Israel, in particular the generation who had left Egypt, could not enter into the Promised Land, or enter into God's rest.

That generation wandered around in the desert for *forty years* and eventually died without entering into Canaan. The Bible says that the reason they could not enter was because of unbelief. We must be careful to understand this correctly. It is not that God was punishing them for having unbelief that they could not enter. No, it was their own unbelief which prevented them from entering. Their unbelief did not have to do with whether there is a God or not, but with the kind of character this God has.

Let us go back to the Old Testament and read the passages that tell us why the generation that left Egypt did not enter into Canaan. As we read it, we should keep in mind that this incident was a type, an example, symbolic of a far greater future event, and that it's antitypical application is for those *upon whom the ends of the ages have come*. Starting with Numbers 14:21-24 we read:

*...but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD — because all these men who **have seen My glory** and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have **not heeded My voice**, they certainly **shall not see the land** of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who **rejected Me** see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has a **different spirit in him** and has **followed Me fully**, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it (emphasis added).*

Has God's prediction that *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*

taken place yet? At no stage in the history of the world has this happened so far. For this reason, the preaching of the everlasting gospel spoken of in Revelation 14: 6-7, which is the message about the character of God, has not yet been fulfilled:

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’

The truth about God’s character will be preached to all the inhabitants of the earth, to a *great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, (Revelation 7:9)*. The world has yet to hear the truth that the Creator is the God of *agape* love and that there is no violence in Him. Jesus Himself placed the revelation of God’s character at the time of the end, just before His second advent:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

The entire Egypt-to-Canaan experience of literal Israel has direct application to modern day spiritual Israel. The words *Upon whom the ends of the ages have come* is a reference to the final generation, to those living just before the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. This last generation encompasses the entire human race. Something of grave significance will be revealed by this group of people, irrespective of whether they believe in God or not. Their lives will demonstrate in no uncertain terms who governs their character, whether God or Satan. Those who belong to spiritual Egypt will live by Satan’s principle

of violence. Those who belong to spiritual Israel will live by God's principle of nonviolence. It is going to be that simple to comprehend so that we all, upon whom the ends of the ages have come, *are without excuse* (Romans 1:20e), whatsoever.

Believers And Unbelievers In God Will Unquestionably Reveal Their Respective Characters

Literal Egypt represented the false belief-systems that prevailed in denying the truth about God's character. Literal Israel was not excluded from pagan worship. Four hundred years in Egypt left its mark on their understanding of God. They became well indoctrinated with all sorts of pagan concepts about God's character; consequently they worshipped the destructive gods of Egypt instead of the God of *agape* love.

The next passage will shed even greater light into why this generation did not enter Canaan. It is found in Deuteronomy 2:14-18:

*And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years, **until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp**, just as the LORD had sworn to them. For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed. **So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people** that the LORD spoke to me, saying: 'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab (emphasis added).'*

The above passage clearly informs us that it was only when the men of war had finally perished from among the people that they could cross into the Promised Land. The language used in this verse can be misleading and we must, with careful study, put together the true meaning intended here. When we read that *For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them*

from the midst of the camp until they were consumed we must keep in mind the non-destructive character of God, and we must realize that these were violent men, *men of war*. A study of the word *corpses*, the word used in the previous passage in the book of Hebrews, reveals why these men were destroyed *from the midst of the camp until they were consumed*. Strong's Concordance defines corpse, kolon, as: "a limb of the body (as if lopped): – carcass." The Amplified Bible translates Hebrews 3:17 like this:

And with whom was He irritated and provoked and grieved for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose dismembered bodies were strewn and left in the desert?

So we see that these men were warring, killing and being killed, dying violent deaths. They lived by the sword and perished by the sword. If we think that God killed them for being violent men of war, then God is no different from them, and has no right to destroy them.

The reason why these men did not enter into Canaan is because they had an evil heart of unbelief; as they believed God Himself to be violent, they also used violence and could not enter into the rest of the non-violent God.

Believers In God, Especially Christians, Will Be Satan's Main Target At The End Time

Why is it that we see so much violence being used by people who profess to be followers of God? And why are Christians in particular using and promoting violence when they should know better than anyone else, since they have the revelation of the God of peace from Jesus Christ? Religionists throughout history have been the chief users and proponents of violence; that is still a fact today. This is Satan's trump card which he hopes to rub in God's face as if to say: 'See, your own people think that my principles are better than Yours,

and they have now become my followers.’ Thus he targets all the professed followers of God, but especially Christians because Christians have a unique revelation of God’s character through Jesus Christ.

Thus, to those *upon whom the ends of the age have come*, is given the warning:

*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the **living God**; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today’, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12; emphasis added).*

We are not to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, which is the principle of *good and evil*, the principle of condemnation and death. It is God’s purpose that we should have life and not death.

A promise was given to us in connection with the life that God has given us according to His own purpose and grace. Satan has misrepresented the life-giving principle of God as also having death in it, so that we would be blinded to the true meaning of this promise. God has promised that we will know that death and all its facets originated with Lucifer. God has also promised that we will know that He is the source of life and that there is no violence from Him. Once we know, accept and choose these truths to be the operating principles in our lives, we are told that something amazing will happen:

...and the serpent you shall trample underfoot (Psalm 91:13).

This same promise is found in Romans 16:20:

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The question as to how Satan will be crushed under our feet is answered further in the Book of Hebrews:

*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself” [JESUS CHRIST] “likewise shared in the same, **that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil**, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15; emphasis added).*

When Jesus died on the cross, Satan’s power over death continued to exist in the world because humanity still believed that God was the author of death. But as a remnant people at the end-time comes to believe that God is not responsible for death at all, then Satan’s power will be destroyed.

We have read that the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. If death is the enemy of God why would God personally use death, His enemy, to punish us? Since Satan, the enemy of God, is the embodiment of the death principle, the last enemy that will be destroyed from the universe will be Satan’s death-causing principle, along with Satan and his followers. It has been clearly stated that it is Satan who has the power of death.

Jesus experienced death so that through His death we may be released from the bondage that is caused by the fear of death. We are subject to bondage all our lifetime through the fear of death. The bondage we are subject to is death itself. By putting our confidence in the God of life, the God who has nothing to do with death, we now become free from the power of death. Thus Satan’s head is crushed when we come to comprehend who it is who had the power of death, and who, along with his emissaries, did all the killing of humanity. The final generation that will be translated will become free from death itself. They will believe that God is *agape* love and will live out His nonviolent character.

Paul Confirms That Jesus Will Give Life To All

In his writings on life, death and resurrection, the apostle Paul reiterates what Jesus stated regarding life, and he confirms that God and Jesus Christ are the source of life. By the power of life that is within Them, the Father and the Son will be responsible for the resurrection of the dead:

*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in its own order:** Christ the first fruits, afterwards those who are Christ's at His coming...**The last enemy that will be destroyed will be death...**'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 26, 54-57; emphasis added).*

How much more clearly could it be stated: death came into the world, through Adam, the first man; he made the choice to enter into the domain of *good and evil* by partaking of Satan's principle. The death principle was not of God. It was Satan's principle and it surely contained death: *for the day you eat of it you will surely die (Genesis 2: 17)!*

God's Command Is Eternal Life

The domain of death is so powerful that it took the life and the death of the Son of God to open our eyes to the good news of the truth about God. God is life and life only, and it is His wish that we may be the recipients of the gift of life, not based on any works which we have done.

*For I have not spoken of My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say, and what I should speak. **And I know that His command is everlasting life.** Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (John 12:49; emphasis added).*

We Must Not Have An Evil Heart Of Unbelief

Regarding the difficulty in grasping and accepting the magnanimity of the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are encouraged, as we read in the passage from Hebrews 3:12-19, to *exhort one another daily, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, through the deception of the principle of good and evil.

In the same manner, Peter warns us not to let go of our trust in the God of life, in 1 Peter 4:17-18:

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now, ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’

Why does Peter say that the righteous is scarcely saved when we are told in Hebrews 2:1-4 that we have been given so great a salvation?

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and

gifts of the Holy spirit, according to His own will?

The problem lies not in God's great salvation but in our deliberate rejection of the truth, in all its great significance, that is in Jesus Christ. The power of the principle of *good and evil* lies in its ability to neutralize the good news of God through deception. That is how Adam and Eve were blinded regarding God, thus hiding in fear of Him, and that is how Satan deceives the whole world. We must be continually guarded against falling into its deceptive web of lies, lest we neglect so great a salvation that God has given us through Jesus Christ. Thus if the righteous are scarcely saved, it is not because God has not given them so great a salvation. It is because the condemnation from Satan's principle is so strong and deceitful, that it is hard to believe the good news that we are all forgiven and unconditionally accepted by God.

A Kingdom Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand

Now the question may be asked: if God is responsible for executing the unrighteous then why does he later resurrect them? Is He someone who would kill evil people and then also resurrect them at a later time? The following statement of Jesus is an eternal principle:

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? (Matthew 12: 25-26).

If we were to restate this principle and place God as the One to whom it applies instead of Satan, this is what it would be saying: 'If God works at cross-purposes with Himself, or, if God first kills evil people and then later resurrects

them, He is working in a chaotic manner and is divided against Himself. How then will His kingdom stand?’

The principle that a divided kingdom does not stand is clearly demonstrated by what has transpired in our world since Adam and Eve sinned, and by the fact that it continues to happen even now. It is a statement of fact and applies across the board in all relationships and situations. We know that God’s kingdom will stand forever, so by deduction we may say that His kingdom is not a divided kingdom.

Jesus’ above statement declares that Satan’s kingdom is indeed a divided kingdom and in the end it will not stand, that is, it will not last into eternity. The proof that Lucifer and his principle will not stand is given in Isaiah 14:

Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?’ All the kings of the nation lie in glory, each in his own tomb; but you are cast out, away from your grave, like a loathed branch, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a dead body trampled underfoot. You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. “May the offspring of evildoers nevermore be named!” (Isaiah 14:16–20)

That last cry, *May the offspring of evildoers nevermore be named!*, evokes Jesus’ words that a kingdom or house that acts against its own interests by destroying or casting out its own people will not last, and its descendants will be no more, because that kingdom will soon come to an end.

Light And Darkness Can Never Mix

God is light. The word 'Light' is symbolically used in reference to God's nature and His very essence. Darkness is the ultimate antithetical symbol to light and in the Bible the term darkness is used to describe the nature of Satan, the principles he introduced in the universe, and his deceptions regarding the character of God. Light and darkness can never be fused to form one entity, as light and darkness cannot be generated from the same source. An attempt to mix the two will never succeed, even if an angel from heaven said it could be so. It is therefore extremely disturbing to see that this deceptive information has become part of the mainstream spiritual thinking. That such a fusion can take place is an absolute lie and is promoted for the sole purpose of deceiving the human race.

Satan and his angels promote the lie for definite nefarious reasons. He believes that if he can convince the human race that God's character is made up of this duality of light and darkness, then as the human race believes and accepts the principles involved in this incorrect concept of God, he, Satan, will in effect be the one who is being worshiped. That he seeks to be worshiped is apparent in Ezekiel 28:2:

Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods'

And

your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness (Ezekiel 28:17).

Such instruction that God is made of darkness and light will never originate from God or His angels, for it is not the truth, for God is light and in Him there

is no darkness at all.

Paul Leads Us To The Right Perspective

The word ‘blasphemy’ means to revile, defame, to speak impiously, to rail on, revile. Thus it would be unquestionably blasphemous to try to justify our belief in a God of arbitrary reward and punishment without confronting the dilemma that this dogma presents. It is advisable for us to consider the mistake the people living at the time of Jesus made, that of thinking that He was Beelzebub. We may fall in the same pit they did, and commit the epitome of evil by believing God is an arbitrary God, when He is singularly *agape* love. God’s *agape* love is the direct opposite of this dual personality God of arbitrary reward and punishment. To propagate such an erroneous belief about God is the height of disservice to humanity. What an abominable and treacherous depiction of God is portrayed in ascribing this duality to His character. This prevailing belief is a debased distortion of His character of *agape* love. Paul states that the God of *agape* love of the universe is diametrically opposite to this tribal god of arbitrary reward and punishment. Paul confirms that, because God is *agape* love, He took all evil upon Himself in the person of Jesus Christ on the cross:

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5: 6–10).

The Light Of The Body Is The Eye

In Matthew 6:22-23 Jesus describes the mind that is governed solely by God's principle as represented by *the tree of life*, and which is not tainted with any form of darkness:

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.

The eye symbolizes the mind and its beliefs. *If therefore your eye is good*, refers to the human mind that is governed by the single principle represented by *the tree of life*. It refers to the mind which knows with certainty that God is *agape* love and that *agape* love is His righteousness. As *the tree of life* reveals that God is *agape* love, so the human mind believes and accepts this single principle represented by *the tree of life*, then the whole body will be full of light. This mind is infused and saturated with divine wisdom, the divine knowledge of God. Then the whole body will be full of light, which is a flawless knowledge of the character and the righteousness of God.

Here we can look at another of Jesus' sayings, the one where he uses the concept of leaven (yeast) to convey His message:

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened (Matthew 13:33).

Yeast has the power of penetrating the whole dough, and even a small amount added to the dough performs its work in the whole. So the correct knowledge of God: once understood and accepted by the soul will impact the whole person's

life and actions.

Only this correct knowledge of His character will have a practical impact in the actions of human beings, who, by beholding the goodness of the God of creation will be changed from glory to glory.

But if your eye is bad, refers to the mind that is governed by Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This mind is in absolute darkness about God's character. If ninety-nine percent of a mind is correct about God's character but one percent is flawed then the entire knowledge of God is skewed. In this respect Jesus gives this warning:

therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness (Luke 11:35).

Therefore, according to Jesus, we must take heed of something of extreme importance. We should not allow Satan to deceive our minds into believing that some or any of the works of darkness are part of God's activities. Therefore, make sure, according to Jesus, that the mind we have is not tainted with any darkness, any evil understanding of God's character because the consequences are total darkness in this connection.

This can again be explained by Jesus' use of leaven as an example of leaven of spiritual truths:

Now when His disciples had come to the other side they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, 'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have taken no bread.' But Jesus being aware of it, said to them, 'O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because ye have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand

and how many large baskets you took up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? – but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:5–12)

The leaven of the Pharisees, though starting from a small misconception of God, grew into the whole lump of their understanding of God, causing them to misjudge and misunderstand God to such an extent that they would come to the point of sentencing Jesus Christ to death, counting Him among the transgressors.

According to Jesus in Luke 11:36, the opposite is also true:

If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.

Jesus equates a correct knowledge of God’s righteousness, God’s character of *agape* love, with the whole mind being full of light, thus having no erroneous belief about God.

No Darkness At All In God’s Character

The apostle John ensures that God’s character will not be corrupted by any erroneous notions when he states that:

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).

Clearly in this statement there is no room 'at all' for darkness of any kind in God. Jesus came from the Father to teach us His eternal principles:

For I have given to them the words which You have given me (John 17:8).

If the essence of God is *agape* love, light and life, then internally and externally God is only Love, Light, and Life:

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks (Luke 6:45).

These words and principles were expressed by Jesus Christ who is the ultimate revelation of God, and as such, they are applicable as much to Him as to us.

As God is immutable, it then follows that regardless of the circumstances which confront Him, He cannot produce evil acts because He is *agape* love. *agape* love is all that proceeds out of the treasure of God's heart, thus He is represented as being light in which there is no darkness at all.

AN EXTRA DAY IN CREATION WEEK

Creation Was Perfect Until Good And Evil Was Adopted

Through the book of Genesis' record of creation we perceive God's invisible essence and His invisible attributes. When God created our earth it was such a breathtaking sight to behold, its splendor so magnificent that even the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God reacted with shouts of joy:

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7).

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

God's original pristine creation undoubtedly was far more glorious than

anything we are seeing now. It visibly reflected the Creator. We are still in awe of the splendor of that perfect Creation even after all the damage that Satan, sin, and fallen humanity have done to it throughout the millennia. The creation of our cosmos was incomparable to anything heavenly beings had previously viewed, because for the first time they saw with their own eyes the process of creation. Their reaction gives us some sense of their state of mind as they saw its magnificent splendor, and they shouted for joy with such exuberance that their chorus of euphoric voices must have filled the entire universe.

Creation Was Very Good

When the entire work of creation, which God had contemplated and planned, was completed in its ultimate perfection, God unequivocally proclaimed that indeed it was very good. This declaration categorically affirms and confirms that God personally created an absolutely flawless habitat for Adam and Eve to reign over, the two of them being the apex of His creation. There was no trace of degeneracy, no hint of destruction, or the slightest shadow of death in God's original creation. Nothing of Satanic origin had yet been allowed to deface the perfectly pristine creation of God.

After Adam and Eve sinned by obeying Satan, they gave up their dominion over the earth to the Destroyer. It was only after the Destroyer became the *prince of this world* (John 12:31), and only after the implementation of his rule of law, that the perfect creation of God began to be negatively impacted.

Who the Destroyer is, is clearly indicated in Revelation:

And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, [DESTRUCTION], but in Greek he has the name Apollyon, [DESTROYER] (Revelation 9:11; emphasis added).

Jesus came to the earth to reveal the character of God and to enlighten the earth and the rest of the universe of the crucial and critical fact that Satan is the Killer and the Destroyer. In the following text we see that Jesus, in comparison to Satan, is the giver not only of life, but of abundant life:

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

Darkness, suffering, destruction and death came in by the thief, Satan, through our first parents to the human race, who had adhered to his law for governance. The destroying thief affected all Creation, from the animate to the inanimate.

God's Character Of agape Love Should Have Been Seen Through Creation

In the creation record the invisible nature of God is visibly demonstrated. If rightly perceived and comprehended, the unadulterated splendor and magnificence of God's creation should determine and confirm that Satan cannot deceive anyone who knows the character of the Creator. God's perfect character is reflected in His perfect creation. However, it is obvious that Satan has deceived and does still deceive mankind, starting with Adam in the perfect world and continuing with those who inherited the imperfect. Just by observing His consummately exquisite creation, there should be no possibility for anyone to believe Satan's misrepresentation that God is the destroyer of His own works.

The original creation reflected the character of the Creator more than adequately. There could be found no dissonance in it, even in its most miniscule components. Creation also resonated with the magnanimity of the Creator's *agape* love in the most profound ways. The Creator's masterpiece

demonstrates in the most exquisite and sublime ways that He creates only the finest of everything, a fact easily verified by observation even today.

And yet, Eve was deceived. The deception came in when Adam and Eve partook of Satan's principle of *good and evil*. Since they believed Satan's lie, their minds were skewed and that perfect creation no longer could give them a correct understanding of God's character. Since our minds are still in Adam and not in Christ, the perfect creation fails to do its work of revealing God's character to us.

With this in mind it is easier to see that all subsequent marring of this perfect planet is the work of God's adversary and of those who adhere to his principle. Cause and effect, not God, will *destroy those who destroy the earth* (*Revelation 11:18*).

Even Now, Creation Reveals God's Character Of Love

God's character, given the empirical evidence of the beauty of His creation, can be easily discerned. This is apparent even amid the subsequent destructive work of Satan and his emissaries after Adam and Eve gave their allegiance to him. If we only understood the nature of that original creation, we would realize how fully it reflected God's agape love before Satan and sin started to deface it. The apostle Paul points us in that direction, when he says that if Creation is accurately perceived and analyzed, no one will ever believe that God is in any way its destroyer:

Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and

changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things (Romans 1:19–23; *emphasis added*).

The New King James Version has a notation for this verse which provides the word *evident* to replace the word *manifest*, and *among them* to replace *in them*. These corrections are closer to the Greek and superbly clarify the meaning of this passage. The translations that say *what may be known of God is manifest in them* or *within them* do not give the correct meaning. The clearest meaning, one that fits with verse twenty, is *evident among them*. Verse twenty tells us clearly that it is since the creation of the world that His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that were made. Thus God is evident among the human race by all that we may observe around us that still retains God's perfect handiwork. Compare the above passage from the New King James to the Berkeley Version of the New Testament below:

*Because whatever can be known regarding God is **evident to them**, for God has shown it to them. From the creation of the world onward His invisible qualities, such as His eternal power and divine nature have been discerned mentally through His handiworks; so that they are without adequate excuse. Because although they had knowledge of God, they failed to render Him praise and thanks as God. Instead, they indulged in their useless speculations until their stupid minds were all in the dark. Claiming to be smart, they played the fool. They even altered the glory of God immortal into images in the form of mortal men and birds, quadrupeds and reptiles [HAVING A CHARACTER LIKE SATAN] (*emphasis added*).*

We Have No Excuse For Not Knowing God's Character

The apostle Paul says that we are without excuse in not knowing the character of God because what may be known of God is evident among us, for God has shown it to us. What is evident among us that we may know what may be known of God? And how has God shown it to us? God has shown it to us by revealing the perfect creation that was completed in six days and by giving us the seventh day that God blessed and sanctified. Verse twenty confirms that God's invisible qualities are seen through his handiworks, which is a reference to creation:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:20).

What are God's invisible qualities? They are His eternal power and divine nature. And what is God's eternal power and divine nature but the essence of His being, that is, His *agape* love? *For God is love (1 John 4:8).*

How can we, who are living in a world that has long been affected by sin, and that is but a shadow of that perfect creation, still witness His eternal power and divine nature? We may witness it by knowing what is stated regarding Creation week and the seventh-day that He blessed and sanctified:

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (Genesis 1:31-2:3).

*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good
(Genesis 1:31).*

This *very good* applies to the totality of the finished work of creation in its perfection. The creation of the world by God, in its pristine perfection, reveals to us His invisible attributes which are clearly seen: that He is the Creator, and that any subsequent destruction of His creation is not His work, so that we are without excuse in not knowing His character. Therefore anything that mars this perfect creation is not the work of God but the work of Satan, and we are without any excuse in not discerning between the work of God and the work of Satan.

The Significance Of The Seventh-Day Sabbath – God's Creatorship

The seventh day was to be a memorial of the fact that God is the Creator and not the Destroyer. This is what God did with the extra twenty-four hour time period: God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it to be a memorial to His creatorship so that we may conclusively know that any subsequent marring of His perfect creation is not the work of the Creator.

We Changed The Character Of God To Reflect Ours

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things (Romans 1:22-23).

We have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – fallen man, man who has been living by the principle of good and evil. By believing that God is both the Creator and the Destroyer we became fools: professing to be wise, they became fools. We then changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man.

In other words, when we ate from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, we began to reflect the image of Satan instead of the image of God. In the next step, we made God to be like us, like corruptible man, and made Him into a God of *good and evil*, confusing the Creator with the Destroyer.

Man has also made God into an image made like creeping things, an image that ultimately evokes the character of Satan. The words creeping things are a reference also to the serpent, the fallen Lucifer. The serpent was the medium through which Lucifer chose to communicate with Eve.

The Sabbath Is A Memorial To The Creator And A Reminder That He Is Not The Destroyer

It is peculiar that God created an extra twenty-four hour time period in the creation week especially in view of the fact that He did not create anything on that particular day. He had, by the end of the sixth day, already ended His work which He had done. Far more unusual and amazing is the extraordinary significance God attributed to this day in connection with the holiness of His character. Incredibly, a complete twenty-four period of time was dedicated, consecrated, sanctified and blessed by God during creation week. Perhaps this noteworthy truth demands that we delve seriously into the reason for its sanctity.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (Genesis 2:3).

The Sabbath Was Given To Remind Us Of God's Character

God blessed and sanctified no other time period except the seventh day. Throughout the Bible one can find no other day which He exclusively names as the Sabbath, as the day of worship. This is the day that He specifically commands us to remember in the fourth commandment: *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy:*

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11).

The reason He bids us *Remember* is because the Sabbath's profound spiritual significance would otherwise be forgotten, and we see that indeed, that is the case.

The Sabbath Was Given To Take Away Our Confusion About God's Identity

On the seventh day God rested from all His work which God had created and made. He established this twenty-four hour time period to be an indispensable part in the revealing of His character as the Creator. This He confirms by blessing and sanctifying the seventh day, and instituting it as a memorial to Himself as the Creator. Through this memorial we are never to confuse Him with the Destroyer. Given all of these clues which He left for us, our ignorance in not correctly apprehending God's character is inexcusable as already seen, according to the apostle Paul.

God Blessed And Sanctified The Seventh Day

God wanted to make sure that the irrefutable truth about His character of *agape* love is never compromised, denied, or neutralized in any way. Therefore God did something out of the ordinary on the seventh day compared to His actions on the previous six days of creation. He created, instituted, and established an extra twenty-four hour time period that He gave to Adam and Eve and all their posterity for a very specific purpose. God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it so that once a week, for the rest of time, man, who is the crowning act of His creativity and who was created before the seventh day was created, would remember that God is the Creator and not the Destroyer of His creation.

The Sabbath Was Created After The Creation Of Man

After the completion of His creation, we read: *then God saw everything that He had made, an indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).*

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Exodus 20:11).

It was immediately after the sixth day that God gave Adam and Eve something that was so special that they were to observe it and celebrate it together with the Creator forever. The importance this day had for God, Adam and Eve and their future descendants, is evidenced by the fact that God waited to institute it until after the creation of Adam and Eve. We must not lose the significance of this reality.

As soon as Adam and Eve became conscious beings, they entered into the seventh day, the day which God blessed and sanctified, and which later came to be called the Sabbath. The word *rest* in this context has nothing to do with physical rest, because Adam and Eve had done no work whatsoever. They entered into the day of rest for a reason other than being physically drained. Therefore we must strive to understand what this rest means.

God Blessed And Sanctified The Seventh Day, Which Was Later Called The Sabbath

It is a settled issue that at the end of the sixth day God had ceased from all of His work of creating. Therefore He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. More relevant and significant information is given later on in the Scriptures about this particular *seventh day* of Genesis 2:2: *The Lord specifically named this day the Sabbath day which He had already blessed...and hallowed (Exodus 20:10).*

God Rested On The Seventh Day

God created an extra twenty-four hour time period which He blessed and sanctified. On this particular day He did not perform the same type of activity that he had carried out in the previous six days. Rather, on this day God does something radically different in comparison to the previous six days. The creative work that He performed on this day and which ended all His works which He had done was comprised of resting: *Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which He had done (Genesis 2:3).*

Creation Was Not Complete Without The Seventh Day

What was this last work which He did and after which He rested? It was the creation of a day which He blessed and sanctified. It was only with the addition of the seventh day that Creation was finally finished, complete. We tend to think that Creation involved only the physical beings and objects created on the first six days, but the seventh day is just as much a part of God's creative activity as those things which are seen.

The seventh day's importance is pivotal for all the creative work that preceded it, for it is the sign and seal of the Creator. The Creator is the One who creates and not destroys; the Sabbath is the sign of the One who loved His creation so much that *He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

The Sabbath Is Unique And Reveals The Unique Character Of God

Only one day in particular, and no other day, from Genesis to Revelation, was set apart by God. He personally entrusted this day with a unique sacredness, and He did it to reflect His character, to reveal the essence of His being. God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. The seventh day is the only day of the week that has been divinely created to be sacred.

As God's Character Is Unchangeable, So Is The Sabbath

For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob (Malachi 3:6).

Malachi 3:6 declares that God does not change. As the Sabbath reflects God's character, it is exceedingly important that we understand why the Sabbath is unchangeable. As a day created to reflect God, the Sabbath must reflect His character in all aspects, and therefore it must always remain the same day. It cannot be changed under any circumstances whatsoever; otherwise it would convey the false impression that He is a capricious God with a variable personality. Were God to be anything other than *agape* love, any given adverse circumstances would cause Him to react differently from the essence of His being. Acting outside of His character of *agape* love would make the statement that He has a changeable character, and all of us who are against Him would indeed be consumed by Him. Human history itself is proof that God does not consume His enemies, for humanity is still here, and so is Satan, His arch enemy.

The truth that God is unchangeable cannot be disputed and can be proven from Genesis to Revelation. The character of God and Jesus, are *the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)*. The God of the Bible is immutable;

therefore we are not consumed arbitrarily by Him for our sins. Whenever any such consuming happens it is the result of Satan's work and not the deliberate activities of God. If the law is a description of God's character, then a changeable God would result in a changeable law. If the law could be changed, Jesus would not have had to die to take care of sin; we would just adjust the law.

The Creator Was Jesus Christ

Quoting the Old Testament and speaking about Jesus Christ, the writer of the Book of Hebrews states:

You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands (Hebrews 1:10).

And again in the Book to the Colossians Paul writes:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence (Colossians 1:15-18).

Jesus Christ is the Creator who gave this day to Adam and Eve and created this day sacrosanct. Therefore only Jesus can boldly make the claim that He is the Lord of the Sabbath:

The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28).

Jesus Christ clearly stated that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Since Jesus Christ is the Creator who created the extra seventh day, He is therefore the Lord of the Sabbath. When we read in Revelation 1:10 that John *was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*, we may safely conclude that the day he is referring to is the same day over which Jesus claimed Lordship. The Lord's Day cannot be any other day but the seventh day Sabbath, for there is no other twenty-four hour time period that is given this type of preeminence in the entire Bible. This day was instituted during creation week for the single reason that it was to memorialize God's character of *agape* love as the Creator and not the Destroyer. Jesus did not establish, promote or predict any other day as the Lord's Day except the day He is the Lord of, and that is the seventh-day Sabbath.

The Sabbath Was Made For Man

In the above passage from Mark, Jesus clarifies that it was the seventh-day Sabbath that had its origin in Creation, for He points back to Creation when He says that it was made for man. He later gave the Sabbath to Moses in the tablet of the Ten Commandments so that this knowledge would not be lost. Jesus further declares that the Sabbath was made for man.

As we have already seen, Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day and then were given the Sabbath on the seventh day. The order in which the creation of man and the Sabbath appeared is of extreme significance and sheds light on Jesus' saying that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Additionally, mankind was in Adam and Eve when the Sabbath was made for man.

The word *man* in the Greek means *a human being*. It can be used to mean all of humanity and it can also be used to mean *a certain man*. That certain man is Adam. In the Hebrew *Adam* means "a human being (an individual or the

species, mankind),” (*Strong’s concordance*).

When Jesus stated that the Sabbath was made for man He was referring both to Adam as an “individual,” and to the “species, mankind.” Therefore the Sabbath that was created by Jesus Christ for Adam was also created for the “human species, mankind,” and it was not confined just to the Jews, as it is erroneously understood by many.

The Sabbath Was Established To Show God’s Eternal Character To Man

Jesus explained the significance and importance the Sabbath has for mankind when He said the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The principle represented by the Sabbath is God’s character of *agape* love which is His essence, and which preceded Adam and mankind. So it was immediately after Adam was created that the principle represented by the seventh day was given to him and to the rest of humanity (who were already in the loins of Adam).

Jesus, The Head Of The New Testament Church, Is Also The Lord Of The Sabbath For The New Testament Church

Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the church. All the followers of Jesus Christ are in agreement on this fact. If the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, then when the church began, the Sabbath was already in existence for the church. Therefore the Son of Man is also the Lord of the Sabbath for it is a gift to the church.

The Creation Of The Seventh Day Does Not Say Evening And Morning As Did The Previous Six Days

There is a sublimely significant spiritual reason as to why the account of this specific seventh day does not conclude with the phrase *so the evening and the morning was the seventh day*, as did the description of the previous six days. That terminology confirmed that each day was a twenty-four time period made up by night and day. So why is it that the seventh day, which we all know for a fact was also a twenty-four time period, does not state *so the evening and the morning was the seventh day*?

In order to understand the spiritual significance of the meaning of day and night on planet earth, we need to understand that creation week is a mini model of the history of the earth. Each day of creation represents a thousand years; the six days represent the six thousand years during which God's light and Satan's darkness have run parallel to each other, thus day and night.

The Bible informs us that after sin is eradicated from the universe there will be no more night:

There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:5).

If night ceases to exist after sin is no longer a reality, then a question arises: why was there night in the six days of creation week, which was also before Adam and Eve sinned? This is puzzling, especially when we take into consideration what Jesus said about Himself, the Creator:

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12).

As we have seen in the chapter titled “What is the Principle of Good and Evil,” *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* did not have any inherent evil properties in it, per se. It only represented Satan’s character and rule of law of *good and evil*. God allowed Satan to have his principle in the middle of the garden, in the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

He also allowed night to exist first with its attendant chaos in order to show that darkness, which represented Satan’s character and principle, was already present when He said *let there be light*:

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light;’ and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day (Genesis 1: 2–5).

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Night symbolizes the principle of *good and evil*, for it is the death principle. The existence of night during creation is further evidence that God had given Satan the freedom to introduce his principle in our earthly sphere. But God did not leave the world at the sole mercy of Satan, for His light is always there. The darkness is emphatically not of God, because as we have read in 1 John 1:5, *God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all*. So we see that the presence of night and day in the six days of Creation is another way of showing what the two trees in the garden represented: light and darkness, God and Satan, God’s law and Satan’s law, life and death.

During creation week the seventh day is not described as having morning and evening or day and night. The seventh day is the promise and assurance that God will be victorious in this cosmic controversy that has gripped our

little planet for the last six thousand years. Satan's principle, represented by darkness, night, is missing from the seventh day because the seventh-day Sabbath teaches us to rest in God's love, as God rested in His love. Satan's principles are not a part of what the Sabbath reflects, and his lies about the character of God are non-existent in the principle that day represents.

When Lucifer renounced the principle the seventh-day Sabbath represents, he introduced his law of good and evil. As a result, his and his followers' outcome will be destruction, as stated in Isaiah 14:12-20:

How you have 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. Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who will see you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?' All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house; but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden underfoot. You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land and slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named [THIS IS THE EARTH, SHEOL AND THE PIT, DURING THE MILLENNIUM] (emphasis added).

Those who are redeemed from Satan's principles will experience the millennial Sabbath in the transcendent sphere with the Lord of the Sabbath. Furthermore, they will see what happens to Lucifer and his rule of law. The above passage describes this scenario when it says *Those who will see you, and consider you,*

saying: *'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?'* At that time, during the millennium, all the leaders of the earth who had adhered to Satan's principles will be in their graves, in the sleep mode. They will be dead, and as such, will be oblivious to the condition of their environment. That is not so for Lucifer, who will *not be joined to them in burial*; he will have a thousand years to reflect on the destruction he has caused on his people.

What is the condition of the earth after the six thousand years of evenings and mornings, when the Second Advent has occurred? During the millennium the earth is described as being in total darkness, and left fully in the hands of the god of this world and his angels. It will also be depopulated, for no human beings will be left alive.

For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine (Isaiah 13: 10).

The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness (Joel 2:10).

The apostle John describes this period of time in Revelation 20:1-3:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

During the millennium, the Destroyer, the King of violence, death, chaos and destruction, will reign supreme on the earth, and he is rightly named in Revelation 9:11:

And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon [DESTRUCTION], but in Greek he has the name Apollyon [DESTROYER] (emphasis added).

The chaotic condition of the earth described in this scenario will be a direct result of Satan's principle of *good and evil*. He and his angels will be confined to this earth, which will be in utter darkness. The absence of light, a symbol of God and His character, is what causes the earth to be in total darkness, and darkness, a symbol of Satan's principle, will envelop the earth for a thousand years.

At this time Satan will be given complete autonomy and will operate freely, without the light of God, which will no longer be present to obstruct his activities. He will have unrestricted opportunity to do whatever he wants with the earth. When God and His creative power are removed from the earth, death, destruction and chaos will be the outcome. Satan and his angels will have a thousand years to reveal the power of the principle of *good and evil*, and they will attempt to recreate the earth and make it anew. However, since Satan is not a creator but a destroyer, the earth will still be found in its chaotic condition even after the thousand years. This will prove beyond doubt that he is not like God, as he had claimed to be.

The question still remains: why did God rest on the seventh day? What is the meaning of His rest? Since God does not need rest in the physical sense and yet He rested on the seventh day, this rest, therefore, must be a symbolic rest. In this symbolic act God showed that His *agape* love, which is the principle the Sabbath represents, will defeat the principle of *good and evil*, and that the Sabbath principle will be the elected law of the universe forever.

To summarize, then: night was a symbol indicating Satan's evil principle which was already present in Satan and his angels, and which would be introduced in our earthly sphere once Adam and Eve obeyed Satan. God's light would also be present separating and distinguishing between light and darkness until darkness is eradicated, never to arise again. Like the two trees in the garden, so is the application of the meaning of the six days of creation week: they indicate our God-given freedom of choice and His magnanimity in giving equal access to Satan. But the seventh day is devoid of Satan's principle, which defames the pure character of God. God does not need physical rest but He rested on the seventh day, which he established as a sign and a seal of His *agape* love.

The Sabbath Is God's Insignia That He Is The God Of *agape* Love

Additionally, the new earth has only one tree, the tree of life. God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it to certify His character of *agape* love. The absence of the phrase *evening and the morning* in reference to the seventh day reveals God's character. The new earth will be a continuous day and there will be no more night there. Likewise, God's essence of *agape* love does not have a beginning nor does it have an end; it is as eternal as He is eternal, and is light continuously. He is the *Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last* (Revelation 22:13).

The Sabbath is the Creator's seal and a sign to distinguish Him from the Destroyer

In addition to the Sabbath being a memorial to God's essence as the Creator and not the Destroyer, the seventh day that God blessed, sanctified and called the Sabbath, is also His Seal and a sign between Him and His earthly followers.

Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generation as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (Exodus 31:16,17).

Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them... I am the Lord your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments; and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God (Ezekiel 20:12, 20:19-20).

On this day God placed His Royal Insignia in connection with His character of *agape* love. He did it so that we will remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. How will we do this? Every Sabbath day that is solemnized for eternity we will know with certainty that God is the Creator and not the Destroyer and will experience genuine rest in Him.

How does the fourth commandment fit in with the moral law? It is imperative that we comprehend the profound moral and spiritual significance that God has attributed to this day. It is immoral to attribute to God the character traits of Satan the Destroyer; thus, for this reason the Sabbath is to be remembered as one of the moral laws of God within the Ten Commandments.

Were God A Destroyer In Any Way, Our Worship Of Him Would Be Motivated By Fear

If God were to be the Destroyer as well as the Creator, there would always be a lingering fear in our minds. We would always be afraid that if we commit any transgression we might trigger His wrath, and consequently suffer lethal punishment. How could we possibly experience rest with the Destroyer's sword hanging over our heads? It is not possible to be at rest when fear is present; for that reason the apostle John wrote that there is no fear in love:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts our fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

There is no fear in love – dread does not exist; but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love – is not yet grown into love's complete perfection" (Amplified).

All Destruction Comes From Satan

When we see chaos, degeneracy, depravity, destruction, disease and death happening on the earth, we are never to ascribe it to God, because these things are in conflict with His *agape* love. All such events should never be attributed to and claimed as the work of God, but should be rightfully ascribed to Satan and his emissaries who live by his principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

One would assume that the creation of Adam and Eve, God's ultimate creative work during creation week, would have received the special mention that

the seventh day did. One would think that some form of special sacredness and consecration would be placed on them because they were created in the image of God; but that is not so. Rather, it is attested that a twenty-four time period has been blessed and sanctified and given the preeminence that one would assume Adam and Eve would have gotten. Therefore, since they had the freedom of either revealing or not revealing God's character of *agape* love, no dependence was placed on them requiring them to be a perpetual reminder of God's essence of *agape* love. Nonetheless it is humanity that will either vindicate God's name or defame it over the issue the seventh-day Sabbath represents. The final showdown will be over the principle that the seventh-day Sabbath represents, for this twenty-four time period is blessed and sanctified, and reveals God's character. The seventh-day Sabbath is the distinguishing seal and ensign that the Creator God of the universe is *agape* love. This sign reminds us that no works of destruction and death originate from Him or are sanctioned by Him.

Satan Took Moses' Life; God Gave It Back, Confirming The Sabbath Principle

From the study of the Scriptures we can all agree that Moses died and was resurrected before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To begin, we read the account of his death in the book of Deuteronomy:

So Moses, the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6).

The account of his resurrection is found in the little Book of Jude:

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)!

The final proof that Moses was brought back to life by God's life-giving principle is that Peter, James and John saw him on the mount of Transfiguration:

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses, and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him (Matthew 17:1-3).

Moses died and was resurrected. Elijah, the other person that was present with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, did not experience death but was translated:

. . .and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (2 Kings 2:11).

Elijah represents those who in the final generation will not experience death, but will be translated. They will not experience death because they will have understood and lived by God's principle of *agape* love.

Jesus Is The One Who Resurrected Moses

It was the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ that resurrected Moses and led Israel, as seen in 1 Corinthians 10:3-4, and 9:

All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ... Nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by the serpents.

How Is Jesus The Firstborn From The Dead?

However, in Colossians 1:18 we read the following regarding Jesus:

*And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, **the first born from the dead**, that in all things He may have the preeminence (emphasis added).*

How can Jesus be the firstborn from the dead when Moses was resurrected before He was? Jesus Christ was the firstborn from the dead because His resurrection happened by His own power:

I am the good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but

I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. *This command I have received from My Father (John 10:14–18; emphasis added).*

The Power Of The Resurrection Is agape Love

When Jesus spoke about the time when He would give His life for the world, He said: *I have power to lay it down.* The giving of His life was made possible only by the power of His *agape* love for humanity, and that giving took place when He died for our sins on the cross. The power of *agape* love is the ultimate power in the universe, for it is the essence of God. Jesus only had power to take it again, which He did when He resurrected Himself, because He had *agape* love as the principle that ruled His life. His resurrection power emanated from His power of *agape* love. The power of *agape* love comes first and ensures the resurrection power. Since *agape* love is the very essence of God, this power precedes all other powers of God.

The Seventh-Day Sabbath Represents agape Love

God blessed and sanctified the seventh-day Sabbath and He asks us to keep it holy primarily and very simply because it represents His *agape* love. *agape* love and the seventh-day Sabbath principle retain preeminence over the power of the resurrection. Without *agape* love, the essence of God, there would not have been the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So the seventh-day Sabbath stays inviolable and does not change because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the first day of the week.

Resurrection Day Should Not Be A Substitute For The Sabbath

Jesus never indicated in the slightest that as the Lord of the Sabbath He became the Lord of the first day of the week because of His resurrection. His Lordship of the Sabbath was never relinquished for the first day of the week because the Sabbath represented and will always represent His agape love.

Other Sheep Have I Which Are Not Of This Fold – What fold?

With whom is Jesus talking with when He makes the following statement: *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold?* There is no question that He is obviously in discussion with Sabbath keepers. So who is He referring to when He informs Sabbath observers that He has other sheep which are not of this fold? Jesus is reaching to all others who are not worshipping on the day He lays claim to be Lord of; these also are very much His sheep. According to Jesus, He has other sheep who do not worship on the Sabbath. They are not of this fold, which means they are not yet worshipping on the Bible Sabbath. But Jesus states regarding them: *them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

Did Jesus Change The Sabbath To The First Day Of The Week In His Last Will?

Had Jesus, in any formal or informal way, intimated that He no longer was, or was not going to be, in the future, the Lord of the Sabbath (of the seventh day of the week), then it would be imperative that we take heed and follow His directive, but He never did that. Since Jesus claimed that He only is the ultimate path to the Father, it should settle for us that He is the only Person who can tell us that the day of worship has been changed:

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).

The apostle Paul confirms that Jesus is the only foundation for truth:

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10, 11).

The Scriptures tell us that He will never change the seventh-day Sabbath, for it would be contrary to His character of *agape* love. Additionally, He made sure that we would not be deceived in this regard by saying:

Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches man so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:17-20).

The passage above is also referring to the Ten Commandments because in verse 21 Jesus says:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment (Matthew 5:21).

One of the common arguments for denying the seventh-day Sabbath is that the Ten Commandment law was done away at the cross. This is surmised by taking the above verses from Mat. 5:17-20 in which Jesus says that He came to fulfill the law. Some have interpreted this verse to mean that the law was fulfilled at the cross and therefore is no longer applicable. Were that to be true, then murder, theft, etc... would be acceptable behaviors. That argument is totally unfounded, but is held forth as an attempt to do away with the fourth commandment, the commandment regarding the seventh-day Sabbath.

The Sabbath has such profound spiritual significance both for God and humanity that He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Would not God clearly inform us if He had any intention of deputizing another day to such preeminent importance? Much more so, given that He is the one who created the day and hallowed it to reflect the very essence of His being?

Jesus knew that He was going to die and be resurrected. One would expect that before His death, in His last will and testament, he would have categorically informed someone, in some way, that the first day of the week, the resurrection day, was to replace the seventh-day Sabbath. However this never happened.

For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives (Hebrews 9:16, 17).

Was The Seventh- Day Sabbath Instituted For All Of Humanity Or Just For The Jews?

Did God want the entire human race to know that He loves them all with *agape* love, or did He just want the Israelites to know this truth for themselves, not caring for the rest of humanity? Did he want the entire human race to love each other or was this truth only for the Israelites? Did He want the rest of humanity to hate and kill each other? It is obviously not true that God wanted this knowledge confined to the Israelites. Who would want to know and worship such a God if that were true? Unfortunately and tragically such a horrid portrayal of God is believed and promoted. The New Testament and Jesus' direct commission denies that such was the case.

Through Moses, God gave the Ten Commandments to *the house of Jacob and the children of Israel (Exodus 19:3)*, to enlighten the rest of mankind about the moral law of God that is founded on God's essence of *agape* love.

God's Love Finds Infinite Ways To Speak To Us

We know that God has many ways through which He communicates revelations about Himself to humanity. One of these mediums through which He reveals His love for us is the Ten Commandments. If this is not comprehended from the outset, the spiritual significance of the Ten Commandments will remain dormant and not come to realization. Worse yet, it then becomes only a dictator commanding obedience, and its disobedience results in punishment meted out according to the extent of the nature of the insubordination. Without the knowledge of God's love for us, the Ten Commandments dictate a forced obedience; but with the knowledge of God's love for us, they elicit a loving obedience. It is therefore imperative that from the start we see God's love for us in the Ten Commandments. That has to take place before we can respond to Him 'in' and 'with' love:

We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

God's agape Love In The First Commandment

Let's take the first Commandment of the Ten and see if it is not the case that God first loved us and then we love Him in return:

You shall have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20:3).

Why is God commanding us not to have any other gods before Him? Is it because He so self-centered that He wants all the attention on Himself? Not for a moment is He so ego-centered that He demands all meditation to be focused on Him. On the contrary, He is the only one who from the essence of His being truly loves us. No other gods clamoring for our attention have that unconditional, self-sacrificing, selfless, other-centered, freedom-giving love for us. When we start understanding this *agape* love that God has for us, we will respond to Him because of His love for us; we will respond in a positive manner and will not be interested in other gods, however they are presented to us. It will not be because we are duty-bound to obey Him that we will comply with His commands. It will definitely not be for fear of arbitrary punishment; and neither will arbitrary reward be a factor for compliance. The purity of His *agape* love for us will be the sole reason and motivation for our obedience. We will love Him because He first loved us.

The Ten Commandments Are Divided Into Two Parts: Love For God, Love For Neighbor

The Ten Commandments are based on God's *agape* love for us first and foremost. Jesus encapsulated and enveloped the entire Ten Commandments in *agape* love. When we come to understand the extent God's *agape* love for us, we will respond to Him in love, and that response is directly addressed in the first four commands, as condensed and stated by Jesus.

The love relationship between us and God can be thought of as a vertical relationship – earth to heaven, heaven to earth. The last six commands have a horizontal application; that is, they apply to our relationships with each other. We must first be grounded in our vertical love relationship with God before His love, working through us, can be materialized in our horizontal love relationship with our fellow humanity. Jesus condensed the Commandments into two, but that did not abolish the Ten:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. [THIS REFERS TO THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS]. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.[THIS COVERS THE REMAINING SIX COMMANDS]. On these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:37-40; emphasis added).

Based on what Jesus, said Paul summarizes the latter six commands in these words:

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8, 10).

God's Love Must Be The Initial Cornerstone In Our Understanding Of The Bible

During Jesus' first advent, the Bible was comprised of the Old Testament. The New Testament was obviously not yet in place. The phrase *all the law and the Prophets* in Matthew 22:40, refers to the totality of the Old Testament which was the Bible in Jesus' time. Jesus, who came to reveal God's true character of *agape* love, is the focus of the New Testament. His revelation of God's love is unique and is the final authority on God's character. Thus the entire Bible must be understood and interpreted only by Jesus' revelation of God's *agape* love. If this is not done, the Bible will give us a distorted view of God. Is God love? Jesus Christ and the Bible unquestionably prove that this is the truth. Therefore, to have a correct understanding of God and the Bible, all knowledge in this respect must be based on this truth alone, that God is love.

The Far-Reaching Law Of Love

To the minds of His hearers, Jesus' words *love your neighbor as yourself*, carried a restrictive meaning, based on what they had learned from the Old Testament:

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you and you shall love him as yourself (Leviticus 19:18, 35).

To change their limited view and give a correct understanding of who is categorized as our neighbor, Jesus gives this story in Luke 10:25-37. We must keep in mind that the Jews viewed the Samaritans as the scum of the earth, and that *a certain man* in this episode is a Jew. Samaritans also had the same mindset toward the Jews:

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?’ So he answered and said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And He said to him, ‘You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.’ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Then Jesus answered and said: ‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down the road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ So which of these three do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise (Luke 10:25–37).’

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34, 35).

The key here is to focus on the words *as I have loved you, that you also love one another*. Jesus’ commandment is not literally a new commandment because the Old Testament had already stated it, albeit with a constricted interpretation. In Jesus’ communication He refers to every human being. From Jesus’ perspective, whom do the words *that you love one another as I have*

loved you incorporate? God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to the world. This includes every sinful human being in the world, and no one is excluded.

Love For All Will Reveal Jesus' True Disciples

When we have God's love for the world in us, a love which includes even our enemies, then we have truly become Jesus Christ's disciples. Unequivocally, according to Jesus, His new commandment, more than anything else, will identify His disciples: *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

Love For Enemies Will Be A Definite Sign Of Jesus' Followers

Jesus expounds more definitively and candidly as to who is our neighbor and what it means that all will know, without exception, that we are His disciples:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven, for He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:43-45).

The apostle Paul elaborates on what Jesus stated in this manner:

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the

ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:6-10).

‘The Ten’ According To The Gospel Of Mark

The apostle Mark recorded Jesus’ abridged version of the Ten Commandments in this way in chapter 12:29-31:

The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

An addition in Mark’s gospel, not found in Matthew, states: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one (Deuteronomy 6:4)*. Jesus certainly hit His listeners’ right between the eyes with this quote from the Old Testament. The children of Israel had made the Creator God to be a God of dual character traits, a God who acted with violence and nonviolence according to what circumstances demanded; and this was true particularly in connection with the way they perceived God treated His enemies.

The Lord Is One Means That The Father And The Son Have One Unchanging Character

Through the quote from Deuteronomy 6:4 Jesus is trying to remind His hearers that to attribute to God these two behavior patterns is blasphemous, for the Lord is one. The oneness of God has to do with the fact that He is only one thing: He is only *agape* love, which is the essence of His being; therefore the Lord is one. His nature is not a mixture of two antithetical principles: one of love for family and friends, and the other of violence and hatred towards enemies. To make God into that kind of God is to make Him into our image, for that is who we are. In addition, when *Jesus says I and My Father are one (John 10:30)*, He is also saying that there is no difference in character between Him and the Father.

The Sabbath Was Meant To Keep The Knowledge Of God's Love Alive

Moses declared that *the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God (Exodus 20:10)*. Moses' statement says that it is none other than the God of the universe who is the Lord of the Sabbath. Now who else had the boldness to make the same claim for Himself, that He was the Lord of the Sabbath? If any human being made such a blasphemous assertion, we would declare him to be a lunatic; but Jesus Christ did make this declaration about Himself.

The Knowledge Of God's Love Was For The Whole World, Not Just A Few

God created, instituted, blessed the seventh day and sanctified it during creation week so that it would be a memorial to His character of love as the Creator. Just as His love was meant for the whole world, so was this day which He created to give the knowledge of His love; it was not meant to be a day just for the Jews, but for every human being. Inherent in *agape* love is always the desire to give the best that one possesses. God created everything to the pinnacle of perfection during creation week, and in His love He gave it to Adam and Eve and their descendants. He gave it. It was theirs until Satan took it hostage.

Satan Desecrated God's Gift To Mankind And We Lost The Knowledge Of God's Love

We are all keenly aware that the adversary desecrated God's gift of love with his principle of *good and evil*. This principle has affected the entire human race because we don't know anymore that *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son* to every child of Adam and Eve. Satan has impregnated us all with his iniquitous nature, and we have all lost the knowledge that God loves us. The seventh day was given to all of us as a memorial that God is the loving Creator, so that when Satan does his evil works to the earth and to its inhabitants, it will be remembered by us that this is not the work of the God of *agape* love!

God Gives So We Can Give To Others In Turn

God commanded the Israelites to remember the seventh day as the Sabbath. So when God chose the children of Israel as His ambassador, they were commissioned to reveal His character to the rest of humanity through the

Sabbath. It was definitely not so that they would keep it to themselves. We have mistakenly concluded that what was given to the children of Israel was exclusively for them only; that is false. When God gives, He gives so that we may give to others, and not so that we may hoard it for ourselves.

Good And Evil Erased Our Knowledge Of A Loving God

Repeatedly the Sabbath, as a sign, is brought to the forefront in God's dealings with the children of Israel. God had desired for them to remember it and to share with others its profound spiritual significance, that God is the Creator and not the Destroyer. This truth about God's character was darkened by the principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and we started believing that God is both the Creator and the Destroyer. The children of Israel failed in exposing this lie because their minds were horribly skewed by the polytheistic belief that prevailed in their surroundings about vengeful and violent gods. They themselves had succumbed to the idea that God needed to be placated so that His wrathful anger could be appeased. Their minds were in bondage to such pagan concepts prior and during their slavery in Egypt, as well as subsequently. That is why, speaking of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah prophesied:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined (Isaiah 9:2).

Jesus, The Great Light, Brought Back The Knowledge Of A Loving God

The Israelites inexcusably failed to grasp and share with others the preeminent truth that emanated from the seventh day of creation week. Therefore they failed in knowing God's character and did not recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah when He appeared *when the fullness of the time had come (Galatians 4:4)* at the first advent. If it was inexcusable for them, how much more inexcusable for us will it be if we fail to grasp the meaning of the Sabbath in connection with the character of God! This is the final chance that the world is being given. Satan's principle of *good and evil* will soon decimate the world, and if we fail to understand these stupendous themes, we will continue to ascribe to the loving Creator of the Universe the awful destruction that is about to take place. When in our minds God is the Destroyer and Avenger, whom do we have to turn to? No one will then be for us.

The Sabbath Becomes A Curse When Observed To Appease An Arbitrary God

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken (Isaiah 58:13,14).

The above passage was meticulously observed by the Jews, who created human rules and requirements, painstakingly keeping them; thus the Sabbath became an onerous undertaking and its spiritual reason was lost in the maze of a works-

oriented religion. What does it mean that we should turn away our foot from the Sabbath, from doing our pleasure on God's holy day, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words? What are our ways? And what are God's ways? And are they different from each other? All of our ways spring forth from the principle of *good and evil*. If the Sabbath is not observed with God's *agape* love in us then we will be breaking all the commandments of God. Listen to what the book of James has to say in this regard:

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, is guilty of all, (James 2:10).

The fact that God's *agape* love became nonexistent in the observance of the Sabbath had dire results. The worst consequence of all is that when the Messiah of *agape* love appeared in the midst of a people bereft of *agape* love, they naturally did what they believed their God would do, and they killed the Son of God.

Being A Sabbath Observer Does Not Ensure That We Are Worshipping The Lord Of The Sabbath

The children of Israel were unfortunately looking for a violent Messiah and not for a Messiah of *agape* love. Because they believed in a violent God, they expected a Messiah who would destroy their enemies and give them the global supremacy they coveted. Even though they were Sabbath keepers, they did not know the Lord of the Sabbath. They rejected Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Prince of peace, who had done no violence, and who was their pre-incarnate bread of life (Isaiah 9:6; 53:9; John 6:35).

Their ancestors all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock

was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:3-5). Why did this evil happen to them, why were their dead bodies scattered in the wildness?

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7, 8).

He who lives by the principle of *good and evil* will die by the principle of *good and evil*. The Scriptures tell us that His chosen people could not be delivered from their warped view of God, therefore as their thinking and living was governed by Satan's principle represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, they reaped from that domain what they had sown. It was for exactly the same reason that their descendants experienced a similar fate in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD through the carnage that was perpetrated by the Roman army.

The chosen people rejected God's character of *agape* love which the Sabbath memorialized, and which Jesus, with such pain, wanted them to apprehend. He desperately yearned for them to accept His teachings about God's character, because He knew the consequences of their refusal would be dire. With unimaginable agony for them within His heart, Jesus said these words:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate (Matthew 23:37, 38).

They reaped the consequences of their rejection of the truth about God's *agape*

love. Because they had chosen Satan's principle and refused the message the Son of God had come to earth to deliver to the world regarding the love of God, they perished, and their house was left desolate.

We Repeat History By Remaining In Ignorance Of God's Love

Is our generation repeating history, despite all Jesus Christ has taught us? Do we have the same distorted view of God that prevailed during Jesus' ministry here on earth? Such a horrid belief about God has consequently resulted in humanity perpetrating unspeakable carnage in His name ever since Satan took control of Adam and Eve's minds. We are very much aware of the fact that we humans have all been involved in much violence. Yet we continue to believe the same lies about God and the results continue to be the same. We Christians have corporately and personally contributed to the chaos by attributing to God Satan's character traits; and by believing and teaching that all the mayhem, destruction, death and carnage that has taken place since Adam and Eve is a punishment of God.

The apostle Paul draws from the Old Testament to describe the true condition of Sabbath keepers. According to him we are in such a condition because we believe that God is both the Creator and the Destroyer, because the true fear of God is not before our eyes:

There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:10-18).

Are We All So Depraved?

A countless number of people could never be classified as being a part of what Paul has so brutally categorized in the above verses. We would all agree, and it is a noted fact, that throughout human history not every human being was as depraved and debased as Paul has stated. So what is he really communicating?

Since Adam and Eve sinned, every human being, without exception, has failed to possess the ultimate and flawless knowledge of God. There was only one exception. Only one being, Jesus Christ, out of the entire universe has ever had the supreme, definitive and perfect knowledge of God. We need to understand this fact because it is of vital importance. If this is not understood correctly, we will fail to understand what Paul meant and why he used such strong language to lump the whole human race in such a way. Paul has correctly stated what was recorded about the human condition. Such categorization is not applicable in the least to Jesus, in Paul's mind and for that matter in anyone's mind who knows Jesus Christ the way He should be known.

The entire human race has been in the condition portrayed by Paul because not a solitary human being has had an unblemished knowledge of God. So if in the least possible way we taint God's character with Satan's character traits, we are what Paul has stated. We can be freed from such blasphemous lies about God by Jesus Christ alone, and as we are gradually set free, we will be delivered from the depth of our depravity because of our erroneous knowledge of God:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him: 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free' (John 8:31-32).

False View Of God In One Point Contaminates The Entirety Of Our Understanding

Once again, if even in the most infinitesimal way God's character is demonized, then His entire character is contaminated and defamed by us. So if even in the most miniscule way, if even in one point we possess the wrong understanding of God's *agape* love and attribute to Him violence, we are still in the uttermost dept of depravity as murderers and as character assassins of God's character of *agape* love. James, the apostle, authenticates this fact by the following principle:

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:8-13).

To Whom Much Is Given Much Is Required

In the parable of the faithful and the evil servants Jesus warns that to whom much is given about the knowledge of God much more is required. What is required of those to whom much more is given is that they be faithful in demonstrating and giving to others the unadulterated understanding of God's character. More so is this to be done by those living just before Jesus' Second Advent.

But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:48).

Those Who Deny God's Nonviolent Character Will Sanction Or Use Violence

Once they denied God's character of *agape* love of nonviolence, the people of Jesus' time utilized violence on anyone and everyone that they were antagonistic towards whenever given the opportunity, including the very Son of God. What was subjectively in their hearts, they demonstrated overtly by their actions. This is confirmed by Stephen's words, directed at Sabbatarians just before they murdered him:

You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it (Acts 7:51-53).

They did this because they believed and lived by the principle of *good and evil*.

Jesus Attests That The Entire Old Testament Testifies Of Him

That the entire Old Testament was a testimony of the coming Messiah is confirmed by Jesus Himself. While walking on the road to Emmaus with two of the disciples, Jesus gave them an understanding of how the entire Old Testament is a revelation of Himself:

Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:25-27).

Further on in the same chapter of Luke Jesus adds the following information:

Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures (Luke 24:44, 45).

Again, *Moses, all the Prophets and the Psalms* were the only Scriptures at this time, and comprised the whole of the Old Testament. We find further evidence that this is true in a previous incident before Jesus’ resurrection, when Jesus made the following statement to His Jewish audience in reference to the entire Old Testament:

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life (John 5:39, 40).

It is quite obvious that Jesus is referring to the entire Old Testament when He says that *these are they which testify of Me*. We can then conclude that when Stephen, in his discourse with His Jewish audience, categorically states these facts, he does not exclude any of the Old Testament prophets who had foretold about Jesus and His coming:

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers (Acts 7:52).

Now we know that not every one of the Old Testament prophets were literally persecuted or killed by the fathers whom Stephen is talking about. So what is the meaning of Stephen's accusation, that they persecuted and killed those who foretold the coming of the just One? Stephen classed them all as murderers because not one of them understood God's character, which the Messiah had revealed. We can further say that even the prophets who wrote about Him did not completely comprehend the nonviolent *agape* love character of God, for it was only Jesus that completely revealed it.

Sabbatarians Of Jesus' Time Failed To Live Up To What Had Been Given Them

One would expect Sabbatarians, to whom were committed the oracles of God, to whom much more is given, and from whom much more is required, to know that God is a Being completely devoid of violence. It is inexcusable for Sabbath keepers to fail to understand God's nonviolent principle of *agape* love, for that is why the Sabbath originated. Thus, even though they worship on the Sabbath day, they nullify the Sabbath principle and the Commandment for its observance because they worship the God of violence. Thus while on one hand they attempt to keep the Commandment *remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, on the other hand, at the same time they annul the Commandment, *thou shall not kill* (Exodus 20:8, 13).

Breaking Even One Of The Commandments Is Violence And Makes Us Killers

Tragically, these deceived and deluded Sabbatarians who were passionate about the observance of the Ten Commandments invalidated all the Commandments of God by breaking two of them. By believing in the God of violence, they broke the Sabbath commandment which attests to God's character of nonviolence; thus they became violent and they broke the Commandment *thou shall not kill*.

The breaking of any of the Commandments automatically places one in the realm of being violent and using violence, and therefore of being the takers of life. Jesus said that the devil was a murderer from the beginning. We have already seen in the chapter "Lucifer and the War in Heaven" that this began when Lucifer rebelled against the law of *agape* love by introducing his law of *good and evil*.

By Breaking One Commandment, We Break All

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all (James 2:10).

How can one say that if we break one of the Commandments we are guilty of breaking them all? Does that mean that if I kill I am guilty of committing adultery also? Or if I steal, am I guilty of not honoring my parents as well?

We can only understand this seemingly illogical concept when we realize that the spirit of the Commandments is broken by the use of violence, which is fueled by the incorrect belief that God is a God of violence. If God is a God of violence then it would follow that God would condone violence. When we know that there is not an iota of violence in God, then we will understand that breaking any one of the Commandments of *agape* love is violence, and is the same as breaking all of them because in *agape* love there is no violence. Whether we know or not that God is nonviolent, breaking any of the commandments will still be violence. When one commandment is disobeyed violence has resulted, and all the Commandments are violated and transgressed because everyone one of them is founded on *agape* love.

To Kill And To Commit Adultery Are Both Violent Acts

Let's look again at how the apostle James explains this principle:

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not kill.' (KJV)

Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do kill, (KJV) you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:8-13).

James makes the claim that if you do not commit adultery, but you do kill you have become a transgressor of the law of *agape* love. It is obvious to everyone that to kill is violence and is a transgression of the law of *agape* love. This is easily understood because of the observable violence involved in the act of killing. According to the law of *agape* love, however, adultery is just as much an act of violence as killing is. This applies to the rest of the Commandments as well, so that breaking any of the Commandments is violence.

James equates do not commit adultery with do not kill for a very special reason. Everyone understands that to kill is violent, but the violence of adultery is not so easily evident; neither is it as evident in stealing. That is why James used the two Commandments relating to killing and adultery, one clearly violent and the other not so evident, to show that they are both violent.

He could have said: For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not steal.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do steal, you have become a transgressor of the law. Had he equated do not commit adultery with do not steal he would have failed to communicate the spirit of the law of the Ten Commandments, which is nonviolence. Killing is clearly violent, while stealing and adultery are not. He wants to make sure that we understand that when we do anything to harm another human being we are using violence, even if the act does not overtly appear to be violent.

Therefore, even when one commits an act that appears to have no overt violence in it, but which brings harm to anyone, that is breaking the law of *agape* love. On the surface, adultery and stealing are not nearly as violent as killing. But adultery and stealing cause harm to all the parties involved and are just as violent as killing. There is then a new level of thinking regarding violence, which goes beyond the mere surface of our actions. Jesus expressed

that truth when He said:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not kill (KJV), and whoever shall kill (KJV) will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire (ESV) (Matthew 5:21,22).

So we see that the principle behind the Ten Commandment law is the nonviolent principle of *agape* love. When any of the Ten are broken, *agape* love is automatically missing, and violence is the result. The Ten Commandment law of *agape* love is violated when the principle of *good and evil* is used; Satan’s principle is inherently violent and is nonexistent in *agape* love. Whenever we transgress any one of the Commandments we are using the principle of violence. Even unloving thoughts are saturated with violence and are bereft of *agape* love. They result in unloving actions, which are violence, and break the law.

A Debased Mind Is The Consequence Of Unbelief In God’s Principle Of *agape* Love Of Nonviolence

The consequences of not having the knowledge of God’s character are clearly given by the apostle Paul. It is important that we understand that it is the lack of the correct knowledge of God that causes the condition that Paul describes below:

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are

not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them (Romans 1:28-32).

Failing to understand that God's character of *agape* love has no violence in it at all, and rejecting this verity, results in a debased mind. A debased mind, spiritually speaking, is the consequence of a wrong knowledge of God. Those who have a false understanding of God can be honorable people, but with this false view, according to Paul, they have a debased mind. Inevitably then, one who has a debased mind believes that God is a violent being even though He is *agape* love. Thus we attribute to God a hybrid character which is the ultimate lie from Satan and which we have believed. Therefore, with this wrong understanding of God's character we end up worshipping Satan instead of God.

Those Who Have A Debased Mind Are Deserving Of Death?

The apostle Paul goes even further to say that a person with this skewed understanding of God's character has a debased mind deserving of death. It must be understood that when Paul says *deserving of death* he means that a person who has consciously chosen to believe the lie about God's character has placed himself into Satan's death domain and cannot see that God is the only source of life. Jesus, who came to show the true character of God and who is the only One who could show it, states the same thing by these words in the book of John:

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:36).

Having a debased mind inevitably results in the breaking of the entire Ten Commandments which, when correctly understood, are the revelation of God's *agape* love of nonviolence.

In the passage from Romans 1:28–32 Paul lists in great detail the consequences of not retaining God in their knowledge, and under close scrutiny we can see that he covers every aspect of the Ten Commandments. The first four, which teach us about God's character, are addressed by the phrase *they did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, and thus they became haters of God. The remaining six Commandments that pertain to our relationship to human beings on the horizontal dimension are addressed by the words *being filled with all unrighteousness*.

To those who fit the above description, *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them (Romans 1:18,19).*

What Is The Wrath Of God?

In Romans 1:18–19 Paul also makes a reference to the Ten Commandments. All ungodliness is the transgression of the first four Commandments, and all unrighteousness of men is the transgression of the latter six.

We must ask ourselves in what manner is *the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men?*

First and foremost we must clearly understand that when Paul says *from heaven* he means the very Throne Room of God in heaven. *From Heaven* can also represent God Himself and the essence of His being, His *agape* love. We must also unmistakably understand that the wrath of God is definitely not

just one aspect of His character, but on the contrary, it is the very essence and nature of God because the wrath of God is revealed by His *agape* love. If not comprehended accurately and truthfully, the way in which the *wrath of God* is understood will with certainty result in the demonization of God.

Understanding The Wrath Of God

We can only understand the wrath of God when we understand that God, in His *agape* love gives humanity the freedom of choice at a risk to Himself that is beyond our comprehension. Only when the nature of *agape* love is understood, and only when we realize what sin has done to God and to His creation can we grasp the meaning of our God-given freedom to choose either Him or Satan.

Paul personally gives the most definitive answer to the important question of what the wrath of God is in the context of this passage. Notice that it is when humanity is adamant and determined in rejecting the correct understanding of God's character of *agape* love, living in utter ungodliness and unrighteousness, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. Paul is saying that when God allowed people to exercise their God-given freedom of choice, with no restraint whatsoever, He gave them up to (Romans 1:24, 26, 28) their inclined preference; this is His wrath. Therefore when people choose to enter into Satan's violent principle of good and evil, God allows them to do so, consequently allowing them to suffer the consequences that are inherent in that principle, which ultimately involve all facets of death.

Agape love does not use force — not even to restrain people from living in evil. Only *agape* love can be used to turn people from evil. *agape* love suffers and takes all the consequences of evil upon itself and is prepared to lose eternal life rather than utilize any method that is contrary to *agape* love. Therefore God gave them up to their ultimate choice of believing and living by Satan's rule of law. 'Letting go' is the wrath of God because *agape* love can do nothing else but to release people to their choices.

Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their heart, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things that are not fitting. . . .that those who practice such things are deserving of death. . . .and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due (Romans 1:24-26,28,32,27).

The passage that says *receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due* confirms that it is the choices we make that determine our destiny.

A Little Bit Of Leaven Leavens The Whole Lump

James' words for *whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all (James 2:10)*, are echoed in the following statement by the apostle Paul:

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? (1 Corinthians 5:6).

From the history of the children of Israel we know that Jesus had the most difficulty reaching Sabbath keepers. In an incident where He was conversing with His disciples, He warned them particularly about the teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. These were the principal teachers of the Jews, and along with the scribes, they had educated their followers with a skewed view of God. Jesus gave His disciples the following warning:

*Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees
(Matthew 16:6.)*

As usual, the disciples failed to grasp the meaning of Jesus' words:

*And they reasoned among themselves, saying. 'It is because we have
taken no bread (Matthew 16:7).*

Jesus corrects their understanding by informing them:

*How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning
bread? – but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of leaven of
bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (Matthew
16:11–12).*

Jesus' revelation of God's character was in direct opposition to the teachings of the religious leaders and their followers

It was Jesus' intent to alert the disciples to the fact that they needed to beware of the teachings of these religious leaders for they were misrepresenting God's character.

The very people who had been given the oracles of God, had a radically different understanding of God than what Jesus proclaimed. The God that Jesus was revealing to them was not the same God they were worshipping. This applied particularly to Sabbatarians who believed in Him and believed Him:

They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:27-32).

Jesus Revealed The Nonviolent Character Of God

As we have already seen, Satan did his misdeed in the Garden with Adam and Eve's minds by causing them to believe the lie about God. Their contaminated view that God is a killer resulted in their being afraid of Him. That is the reason they hid from Him after their disobedience.

Jesus Christ has by His life, death and resurrection exposed this skewed

view of God as a lie. Unfortunately even after Jesus' revelation we continue to embrace the warped view of God that Adam and Eve had after they sinned. By His High Priestly work in the transcendent sphere, Jesus is currently still attempting to cleanse our minds of Satan's lies regarding the *agape* love character of God, which has no trace of violence in it.

We have the event of the cross, which is the ultimate revelation of God's character to help us know His nonviolent *agape* love. It is to us then that these words apply:

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:48).

There Was Almost No Knowledge Of Satan In The Old Testament

There are a few indirect references to the devil in the Hebrew language with a couched meaning attached to it. One such verse is Leviticus 17:7:

And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring (KJV).

The NIV interpretation is more in line with what is stated in the original Hebrew:

They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves (NIV).

However, Satan's presence in the entire Old Testament would have been virtually nonexistent if it was not for four explicit references in the following Books and verses: 1 Chronicles 21:1; Psalm 109:6. In the book of Job he is mentioned in chapters one and two, and in the book of Zechariah in chapter three.

With such limited knowledge of God's Adversary, the Destroyer, the Accuser, it is understandable that the writers of the Old Testament cannot be held fully responsible for blaming all evil on God. The entirety of the prevailing belief systems around them also did exactly the same. In their thinking God is sovereign and supreme, therefore evil acts were also attributed to Him. So we can rightfully conclude that the God they worshipped, and justifiably so because of their ignorance, was both the Creator and Destroyer.

The New Testament Is Filled With References To Satan, The Devil

We, to whom much more is given, cannot justify our ignorance in ascribing to God the evil acts of Satan and his emissaries. We are inexcusable, for we have been given informative evidence about Satan under his different names and classifications, from Genesis to Revelation, with a few in the Old Testament and the majority in the New Testament.

In addition, we have the cross event which in no uncertain terms reveals to us the nonviolent *agape* love of God. We have at our disposal information beyond anything that any previous generation had, to the effect that we may know the facts for such a time as we are living in, so that we will comprehend the truth about God's character.

After all the knowledge given us by God on a golden platter, our failure to know God's character as the Creator and Satan's character as the Destroyer will seal our fate for weal or for woe. In light of all of this, when we ascribe or impute to God the death and destruction that is the fall-out for sin from Satan's rule of law, and attribute to God the works of the Devil, we are in fact in a worse situation than the generations of the Old Testament times, and

for that matter, of any previous generation. Imputing to God the death and destruction that originates from Satan and his rule of law, we are in actuality denying the existence of Satan as God's antagonist. If God is the Creator as well as the Destroyer, then what is Satan? Is he a mere observer?

It is painful to observe how we continue to demonize God's character, and mix His *agape* love with violence. We do so even after having been given the profound revelation from the cross and from the Sabbath! Both the cross and the Sabbath attest that God is nonviolent; nevertheless we persist in imputing Satan's character traits to God, and this is the height of depravity which the Bible calls the unpardonable sin.

It is extremely difficult for our finite minds to comprehend the unimaginable agony that God our Father is experiencing over our warped view of Him. Jesus wanted us to know that God is our heavenly Daddy. Regrettably, we, His earthly children, believe Satan's lies about Him and therefore live in fear of Him. We view Him as a tyrant who will readily use violence toward us if we disobey His will for us.

Could we but understand God's *agape* love and have an inkling of what we are subjecting God to by the lies we believe about Him, we would turn the world upside down to change our thinking. Our views and our behavior speak volumes about who we are as Christians who have been given enlightenment above and beyond that of any other religious group.

The Sabbath Principle Determines How We Defend Ourselves

Some will vehemently claim that violence is needed at times, in particular when it comes to self-defense. They will make the argument that if our earthly father did not defend us from intruders he would be negligent; thus it is taken for granted that if our earthly daddy uses physical strength to defend us from a murderer or rapist, we would love him all the more. After all, how would we feel about him if he did not protect us from evil?

The answer to this problem requires an unshakable faith in the God of love.

If we truly desire to follow Him, we need to learn to defend ourselves and our loved ones in a way that does not use violence. Then we will truly reflect His character and His principle of nonviolence.

We will come to know that God defends us with *agape* love and dies Himself, as He did in Jesus Christ, while defending us. We will appreciate that love far more than if He killed the enemy by the use of violence and saved Himself and us by the same satanic violent methods.

On the cross God allowed His Son to be literally murdered in the most inhumane way possible that was available in those days. He in His *agape* love suffered with His Son through the agony of the cross. All who come to understand God's character will live by the principle of the cross and defeat Satan and his rule of law. This would mean they would not defend their loved ones with violence but would die with them or for them.

Such people will defeat Satan and his principle of violence by the principle of the cross according to the apostle John.

And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, and did not love their lives to the death (Revelation 12:11).

In this connection, the apostles Peter and Paul stated what they learned from Jesus about the principle of the cross:

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in His steps: Who committed no sin nor was deceit found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when he suffered, He did not threaten, but committed

Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1 Peter 2:19–25).

*Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ — who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, **who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.** For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,** casting down arguments and every high thing that **exalts itself against the knowledge of God,** bringing every thought into captivity **to the obedience of Christ,** and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled (2 Corinthians 10:1–6; emphasis added).*

In this respect Jesus said that all of His followers will do what He did:

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it (Mark 8:34–35).

The next verse indicates that if we reject God's *agape* principle of nonviolence, which, according to Jesus we must apply even to our enemies, we will lose our souls:

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his

own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:36–38).

The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor (John 12:23–26).

We Still See God As A Violent God

The tragedy of tragedies is that we actually want to continue believing the same lies about God that Adam and Eve believed when they obeyed Satan. This original lie, which Adam bought into, is that we need to be afraid of God because of a supposed violent streak in Him toward those who disobey Him. God's warning to Adam, *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die*, (Genesis 2:17), was turned around by Satan, so that its new meaning would be: beware, God is out to kill you. Are we still interpreting the Scriptures and perverting God's character in the same way as Adam and Eve did after they sinned? Take the following passages for instance:

For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)

Sin is Satan's rule of law, and inherent in it is death, which is the wages of

sin. Therefore, 1) Satan's rule of law, 2) sin, 3) wages of sin and 4) death are all one and the same inseparable iniquitous principle. All four do not have anything in common with God's character and His kingdom principle, but are directly in conflict with everything He represents and stands for. These are all at enmity with God. We are told that,

The last enemy [OF GOD] that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26; emphasis added).

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

When Jesus died on the cross He took upon Himself all the fall-out for sin that came from Satan's rule of law of *good and evil*. Thus He revealed God's love, which does not arbitrarily punish sinners. When this fact is known, believed and demonstrated, then the power Satan has over death is destroyed.

God does not destroy Satan the way Satan wants us to believe God operates. His destruction happens when he is completely left to his own rule of law, from within which he will experience his demise.

All four, as enemies of God will be destroyed: Satan's rule of law, sin, wages of sin and death, for they belong to the death principle. The above verses clarify that death is not of God but is His enemy; therefore we cannot claim that God is responsible for the death of all who have died since the time of Adam and Eve. Death originated when Lucifer introduced his rule of law. God has never been involved in any act of killing.

How many of us have used this verse, *for the wages of sin is death*, to point out that God absolutely and assuredly will destroy sin and sinners with death? What about the very next words that follow them:

But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

It is the gift of God that destroys the death principle, and neither the first death nor the second death will be in existence in the future; there will be only eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus Christ's life-giving law of *agape* love will be all in all.

Jesus Christ Tells Us Who The Killer Is

Do we not see the verse *the wages of sin is death* in the same way that Adam saw God's warning? Do we not interpret it to mean that God destroys sin and sinners but saves only those who believe in Jesus Christ? Believe in what about Jesus Christ our Lord is the question that should be correctly understood and answered.

The answer is given by Jesus in one of His discussions with His Jewish listeners: believe in the message of Jesus Christ, who told us that God, His Father, kills no one.

I speak what I have seen with My father, and you do what you have seen with your father (John 8:38).

The contrast Jesus makes between His Father and His listeners' father show that their father is he who was a murderer from the beginning. He is the killing agent.

Will Satan commit suicide in the end? In one aspect yes he will. He was warned that inherent in his principle is death. All who commit themselves to his principle will die by it, including himself. In this way he chose to commit suicide. His law is a self-destructive principle that will implode, killing him and all of his followers.

Murderer From The Beginning

The original meaning of the Greek word for ‘murderer’ is ‘manslayer.’ It is with this understanding, conveyed in the totality of the context of His discussion with His Jewish listeners, that Jesus further elaborates on why He called Satan a murderer:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).

It is the law introduced by Satan into the universe that makes him a manslayer from the beginning. As his law contains the principle of life-taking, he, therefore, through his law, causes and administers all death.

Because Our Nature Is Good And Evil, We See God As Good And Evil

The discourse between God and Adam in the Garden proves the point about Satan’s lies about God. This lie stemmed from Satan’s principle of *good and evil* which Adam and Eve believed in after they disobeyed God. The monstrous lie that Satan, through the principle of *good and evil* taught Adam and Eve is that God is someone to be feared. This principle told Adam and Eve that God executes those who disobey Him. It made His warnings sound like a threat and if you happened to disobey Him, then you shall surely die. It therefore said to Adam and Eve: “Be afraid of Him Adam, because now He is going to be your executioner.”

God Came Looking For Adam Without Condemnation

If we look closely at God's behavior after Adam's disobedience, we will notice that His actions reveal the opposite of what Satan had conveyed. God went looking for His fear-filled children in the cool of the day to demonstrate to them His perfect love which casts our fear *because fear involves torment*. Let's look again at the complete verse from 1 John 4:18, from the Amplified Version and transfer it in our minds to that scene in the Garden:

There is no fear in love – dread does not exist; but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love – is not yet grown into love's complete perfection."

Adam and Eve hid from God because of the fear that they had learned from Satan's principle of *good and evil*, which was now a part of their thinking. Satan made them see God as a violent Being who had rejected them for their disobedience. Now that they were experiencing forsakenness, they also believed God was going to kill them. This skewed view of God materialized after they disobeyed God's counsel, because their disobedience entailed adopting a new system of principles which would cause them to lose their correct view of God's character.

The cross confirms the veracity that the principle of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* had negatively impacted Adam and Eve's minds toward God.

On the cross *Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me (Matthew 27:46)?'* Jesus was subjected to all the fall-out from *good and evil* even though God had not forsaken Him. God never leaves or forsakes anyone. *For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' (Hebrews 13:5).*

Contrary to their false expectation, what we see in God's behavior is evidence

that Adam and Eve were not forsaken. He had no words of condemnation or the intent to punish. Rather, God in His *agape* love called out to them saying, where are you?

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and His wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?' So he said, 'I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself (Genesis 3:8-10).

The curses that follow, as previously addressed, are only a statement of the consequences of adopting Satan's rule of law.

We, Adam And Eve's Children, Are all involved in bringing In The Final Resolution Of The Cosmic Spiritual War

We are all descendants of Adam and Eve, and are all brothers and sisters and children of that first couple. We will all be given the privilege of playing a pivotal role in vindicating God's character before the world, prior to the second advent of Jesus Christ. *There is no partiality with God (Romans 2:11)*, for God is absolute and does not change according to circumstances, therefore His principles in dealing with each of us are the same across the board regardless of who we are.

All the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve will have the privileged responsibility of knowing and demonstrating God's character of *agape* love. There is no partiality with God so every progeny of Adam and Eve, without exception, will demonstrate one of two things through their relationships to each other: whether they live by God's law of *agape* love or by Satan's law of *good and evil*.

The Sabbath Principle Will Play A Pivotal Role

The seventh day Sabbath and the principle it stands for will certainly be involved in the issues facing mankind at the end time. Again, what was the reason for which God had blessed the seventh day and sanctified it? The reason God gave us the Sabbath so that death and destruction will not cause us to forget that the Creator is not the Destroyer, but that He is the God of *agape* love.

The last issue facing the human race will involve the character of God, which is represented by the seventh-day Sabbath. Every child of Adam and Eve will reveal by their actions of violence or nonviolence, whether they are the worshippers of God or of Satan.

There is no denominational, religious, political, racial, economic, cultural, gender or geographic barriers in this last issue of the final phase of world history. We will all be involved in the decision of our fate, for weal or for woe, and there will be no exceptions. In that process, we will reveal whether we are the worshippers of the true God or whether we have as king over us the angel of the bottomless pit, who is none other than the Devil himself.

All Of Us Will Choose Either *agape* Love Or Good And Evil

The Bible says that God *will render to each one according to his deeds (Rom. 2:6)*. The choices each one makes and the resulting actions will place everyone either for God or for Satan. Each one of us will reveal one of two things, and there will be no third option. To one another on planet earth and to the rest of the universe, we will each demonstrate in our life either God's law of *agape* love represented by the sanctity of the seventh day, or Satan's rule of law of arbitrary punishment, death and destruction. This is what the apostle John has to say to all of us:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also (1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20, 21).

If God's Character Is His Seal, Then agape Love Is The Seal Of God For God Is Love

The *agape* love of God represented by the seventh-day Sabbath is the seal of God to memorialize that He is *agape* love and not the Destroyer. The Bible tells us that those who will know the love of God will be involved in portraying His *agape* love to every human being on planet earth. They will be critically involved in manifesting God's love. This demonstration of unconditional, self-sacrificing love will occur when evil reaches its peak among humanity and this is not far in the future. Jesus warned us not to let this love grow cold when evil becomes rampant on the earth. In Matthew 24:12 He says:

And because lawlessness will abound the love of many will grow cold.

When evil reaches its highest point, there is a great danger that those who now have God's *agape* love in their hearts will transition back to using the principle of *good and evil* because their love grows cold. And those who already have the principle of *good and evil* in their hearts will be even further hardened into it and will demand escalating punishment. They will demand the most severe forms of punishment conceivable in order to deter evil.

Now Is The Day Of Salvation From The Principle Of Good And Evil

We should not neglect to live-out God's love now instead of delaying it with the expectancy that we will be prepared later in that future time period just before the Second Advent. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (1 Corinthians 6:2)*, salvation from the principle that brings destruction and death.

God's principle of *agape* love teaches us the opposite of the principle of *good and evil* and shows us that:

...where sin [GOOD AND EVIL] abounded, grace [agape] abounded much more (Romans 5:20; emphasis added).

Mankind's reactions to lawlessness (*where sin abounded*), will reveal whether they have or have not lived by the law of *agape* love represented by the seventh-day Sabbath. This revelation will be most obvious when everyone will be confronted with evil particularly at its pinnacle. At this time all those who reveal God's *agape* love in their lives by their actions will receive the seal of God, and those who do not live by God's *agape* love will receive the mark of the beast.

God's And Satan's Followers Revealed

The seventh-day Sabbath was created and instituted, blessed and sanctified, to dogmatically confirm something of supreme importance and significance about God's character that we are to emulate: that He is *agape* love and there is no violence in Him. The Sabbath was put in place to remind us that after sin is introduced in our earthly sphere and mayhem prevails, God's character does not change from nonviolence to violence towards friend or foe alike. If

God has revealed this about Himself to us, then we as His followers, when lawlessness shall abound, must not allow our hearts to be hardened or God's *agape* love in us will become nonexistent.

Jesus cautioned us about something of grave spiritual significance. He warned us that just preceding His second advent when iniquity or lawlessness prevails and permeates the earth in the lives of people, the love of many shall grow cold:

*And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold
(Matthew 24:12).*

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (KJV).

We all should make certain that this will not happen to us, that our love will not cool. When lawlessness *will abound* in others, our reaction will also reveal whether we are living by what the seventh-day Sabbath stands for or by Satan's law of *good and evil*.

If we believe that God utilizes violence towards His sinful enemies, then all of us who are followers of such a God will imitate His actions. Thus the seventh-day Sabbath principle of God's law of *agape* love, in which there is neither violence nor destructive work, will be denied and refuted by our reaction to lawlessness and iniquity that will abound. The line of demarcation drawn between God's or Satan's followers will be evidenced by our response to lawlessness. The use of violence or nonviolence will determine which camp we choose.

Any violation of God's law of *agape* love is violence because there is no violence in *agape* love. If in any way we are violating God's law of *agape* love in the horizontal dimension, we are guilty of being violent towards our fellow human family, even though it may not look as if we are overtly committing violence. When any harm is caused, it is violence towards the one harmed. When one steals someone else's possession, one has hurt that individual,

thus causing violence towards that person. The same principle applies to our dealings with our parents, to taking life, in whatever form that may be, to committing adultery, bearing false witness, and coveting. All of these are hurting someone.

The Seventh-Day Sabbath Commemorates God's Character And Was Affirmed, Not Nullified On The Cross

The extra day had its origin in creation week and predates sin. It was instituted to be a memorial to the reality that God is *agape* love. In that light it would be preposterous to suggest that the seventh-day Sabbath was abrogated at the cross, and that it ceased to be what it was originally created to eternally memorialize.

The cross declared and confirmed that what the Sabbath represents is truthful, for it is through the cross that we see that God is *agape* love in that He took all the punishment for sin upon Himself. God the Creator rested on the Sabbath day from His work of Creation. And God the redeemer rested on the Sabbath day from His work of redemption as He lay in the grave. Both occasions demonstrate that He is *agape* love.

The Cross Affirms The Sabbath

The divine significance of the seventh-day Sabbath relates to God's character of *agape* love, and that love was affirmed and not nullified on the cross, so the Sabbath's applicability has not ceased. What transpired on the cross substantiated this truth and definitely did not nullify the seventh-day Sabbath and the eternal principle it was designed to represent. The cross confirmed why God had created an extra twenty-four hour time period and called it the seventh-day Sabbath. The ultimate revelation of God's character of *agape* love was demonstrated by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. On the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the totality of the fall-out for sin. He experienced the entirety of the punishment of sin, including both the first and the second

death. Isaiah 53:8 confirms that:

For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken.

Jesus experienced both the first and second death on the cross because of His and the Father's *agape* love for us so that we would not have to experience death, the wages of sin. Even though the first death is referred to in the Bible as sleep, it is part of the fallout of sin, because if there was no sin, the first death would be nonexistent. *But the gift of God is eternal life* which was given to us *in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23)*. The first death is the literal death He underwent. Beyond that He also experienced the second death, the eternal oblivion, when He *cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' (Matthew 27:46)*.

Since Jesus lived and died by the principle of *agape* love He also experienced the resurrection because Satan's principle could not hold Him in the grave. This He confirmed when He said: *The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me (John 14:30)*. He told Martha: *I am the resurrection and the life, He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (John 11:25)*.

What Jesus Experienced On The Cross

Jesus Christ was completely one with the Father in every sense of the word, unified by *agape* love. Only He could therefore experience such forsakenness. No one ever has or will ever have the same experience Jesus underwent because no one will ever be one in *agape* love with God in that ultimate sense. Some will experience the second death and be no more. But no one will have the same indescribable and unimaginable pain of separation from the Father which Jesus Christ encountered because no one has been united with the Father in

the same manner that Jesus was.

The Lord Of The Sabbath Overturned The Results Of Sin

Even though Jesus took upon Himself the entire consequence for every aspect of all sins on the cross, Satan still is the prince of this world. Consequently, we continue living under his rule of law and continue to experience the end result of his hegemony. Jesus went about overturning the results of Satan's evil law, proving that those consequences were not caused by the Lord of the Sabbath:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan (Matthew 4:23–25).

Further evidence that Jesus Christ took upon Himself the consequences of sin is given in Matthew's cross-reference from Isaiah proving that He is the healer and giver of life, and not the One who inflicts pain and suffering on people as a punishment:

When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'

(Matthew 8:16, 17).

The First Death Is Part Of The Results Of Sin

Jesus bore on the cross all of the consequences for sin, and that certainly does not exclude the punishment that inseparably goes with sin, which is the first and the second death. Some claim that the second death was the only experience that Jesus underwent on the cross for humanity; therefore according to this reasoning the second death is the only death from which He saves us. This group believes that God does not punish anyone with the second death, but He does punish sinners with the first death and that is why we are still experiencing death. Once again the cross in no uncertain terms proves beyond a shadow of a doubt the inaccuracy of that erroneous belief.

The cross-reference that Matthew took is from Isaiah 53:4 which states: *Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.* Literally translated it reads *surely he has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains.* The first death, the sleep death, is an extremely painful process for the majority of people and also for almost all those dear ones who are left behind. The pain on the faces of those who have lost their loved ones to Satan's death principle is unimaginable except for those who are undergoing such an experience.

Did Jesus not take all of our pain and die the most excruciatingly painful death for the sins of humanity? The death on the cross is not referring just to the second death when He experienced the ultimate forsakenness. If we deny the verity that He also died the first death for the sins of humanity, we will fall into the fallacious claim that God does kill people with the first death. This assertion denies what God in Jesus Christ did for humanity on the cross.

If we claim and propagate that God still punishes with the first death, then we must also declare that he punishes with all manner of diseases, sickness, earthquakes, etc...for these are the things that are part of the first death. This belief is far more insidious than the belief that most have that God is personally involved in every aspect of death, including the second death. It is easier for

this second group to see the light, even from the utter darkness that they are in, than for the first group who claim God kills in the first death and not in the second. These are in the twilight zone, and are neither in darkness nor in light. These are the people who definitely do belong to the Laodicean church which is *lukewarm and neither cold nor hot* (Rev. 3:16).

This misguided understanding depicts God as an arbitrary dictator, and justifies His harsh actions by giving the weak excuse that He knows best, and that He knows when and on whom He should use violence, even to the extent of committing genocide. The same weak reasoning claims that He needs to save the so-called good people from the evil ones, and He therefore is justified, in His infinite wisdom, in using violence against those that do not comply. He is also said to not only personally execute some, but to command others for the enforcement of the evil work of execution if and when He feels it is warranted. This is the reasoning behind the principle of Satan, and is not of God.

As Redeemer, Jesus Also Rested On The Seventh Day

After Jesus Christ had completed the work of redemption on the sixth day, *the Preparation Day*, He said, '*it is finished!*' (John 19:31, 30) He then rested in the grave on the Sabbath day.

In His *agape* love God did not punish anyone with violent death; on the contrary, Jesus took the punishment required by the principle of *good and evil* upon Himself, to the extent of even dying a violent death Himself. Thus Jesus validated, authenticated and revealed that He is *agape* love, the Creator, who is also the redeemer and not the Destroyer. The thief is the one who kills and destroys with the first and second deaths, but Jesus gives life and that...more abundantly:

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly

(John 10:10).

The seventh-day Sabbath was instituted at Creation so that this truth would be known with certainty, so that when in the future death and destruction occurred it would be remembered that they are the inevitable results of Satan's principle and not of God's *agape* love.

The Sabbath Reveals God's Eternal Character Of Love

The Commandment regarding the seventh-day Sabbath is given prominence by the extensive amplification it has been given in comparison to the other nine. The fourth Commandment was never a shadow that pointed to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross nor did it cease to have significance after the cross. Were that to be true, its applicability and continuance after the event of the cross would thus be nullified. The cross, on the contrary, revealed that the Sabbath principle is as eternal as God's character of *agape* love is eternal. The cross revealed who is the true nonviolent God, and unequivocally distinguished Him from the false god of violence, who is Satan. We have all fallen prey to the false god of violence when we claim that the God of the universe is violent.

The Sabbath Was Confirmed At The Cross

As stated earlier, there is a common error in our day that teaches that the moral law was abolished at the cross. If that is true, then the commandment *thou shall not kill* for instance, has been abolished along with the other nine. Are we now then free to kill, steal and break the others? Paul addresses this very subject by the inspiration of God, who knowing beforehand that His law would suffer such an attack, preempted the enemy by giving us the truth:

Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law (Romans 3:31)

The above passage is certainly referring to the Ten Commandments, the moral law of God, which includes the Sabbath. It is not addressing the ceremonial laws, which are the laws that pointed to the cross and were therefore abolished at the cross.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet' (Romans 7:7).

Is there a problem with the law? Certainly not! It is sin itself that has created the problem with the law for us. Paul tells us what is the status of the law:

But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead (Romans 7:8).

Adam and Eve sinned when they obeyed Satan's rule of law that was represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The whole human race has inherited the principle of *good and evil* from them and our lives are controlled by it. When the Ten Commandment law is viewed with this sin controlled mindset as arbitrary, then the law of *agape* love that is in the Ten Commandments becomes sin for us, even though *the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good (Romans 7:12)*.

Because our minds operate by Satan's law of *good and evil*, which is sin, we are no longer able to understand God's law of *agape* love. God's law is holy,

His commandment is holy, just and good; but because our minds have been warped by *good and evil* we no longer are able to see *agape* love for what it is. The law says you shall not covet. If we had *agape* love we would automatically fulfill the law, because he who has *agape* love would not covet. If *agape* love was the supreme operating principle in our lives, we would not need to be told not to covet because there would be no desire to covet in us.

With the above understanding then, it is extremely crucial and critical that we answer the following question: is the Ten Commandment law sin? When Paul states *certainly not* he makes it clear that the Ten Commandment law is not sin. Jesus confirmed this by encapsulating the whole Ten Commandments under *agape* love.

Because *agape* love is the one supreme law of the universe, therefore sin is the transgression of the law of *agape* love. We sin when we interpret God's Ten Commandments with the mind of *good and evil* rather than *agape* love. Such a mind works through fear and not *agape* love. It attempts to keep the law for two reasons: either in order to avoid punishment, or as the means of finding favor with God through good works in order to obtain the reward of salvation by merit. Either way, the underlying motive seen here is a selfish one, and has nothing to do with love toward God or neighbor. In this sense, and in this sense only, has the law been abolished, that we no longer keep the law for these selfish reasons. Now we may keep it in *spirit and in truth* (Jn. 4:23) because of the revelation of love that Jesus Christ came to give us. Jesus has abolished the old way of keeping the law, and has shown us how to live in the law of love, by living in continual love toward the Father and toward each other. This is the true meaning of being born again:

Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again' (John 3:5-7).

Was The Sabbath Done Away With At The Cross Then?

If the Ten Commandment law is sin, then the Sabbath law is also sin. This raises an exceedingly fundamental and decisive issue. We must clearly understand whether the Sabbath law is sin, and whether God has abolished this law, having nailed it to the cross.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not, (Romans 7:7)!

The apostle Paul has settled this issue for us. Yes, the law would be sin and would have been abolished at the cross if the underlying principle were not *agape* love. But this is obviously not the case for we know that *agape* love is the foundational principle that governs every one of the commands. If we view the law as a set of arbitrary commands with arbitrary reward for obedience and arbitrary punishment for disobedience, which is the mindset of the principle of *good and evil*, then the commands definitely generate sin, and they would have been abolished at the cross. If we conclude that the law was not abolished at the cross, then it follows that the seventh-day Sabbath was also not abolished or substituted by another day, for Jesus said:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

Did Sunday, The First Day Of The Week, Replace The Seventh Day Sabbath?

In the entirety of the New Testament there are eight references to the first day of the week, which is Sunday. If this day were to replace the seventh-day Sabbath, one would expect it to be clearly stated in one of these eight references. There are however many unmistakable divine commands given for the sacredness of the seventh-day Sabbath as the day for worship. If the day of worship was changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week, why is not the same compelling, convincing and authoritative command given for the first day of the week? Nowhere in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, are we told by God that Sunday, the first day of the week, will replace the seventh day of the week for worship. Below are all the passages in the New Testament that address the first day of the week:

(1) Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb (Matthew 28:1).

(2) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen (Mark 16:1, 2).

(3) Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons (Mark 16:9).

(4) Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other woman with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared (Luke 24:1).

(5) Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb (John 20:1).

(6) Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you' (John 20:19).

(7) Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

(8) Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight (Acts 20:7).

The first thing we must note from the above passages is that Sunday is always called the first day of the week and not the Lord's Day. Not once is it referred to as the Sabbath, and not in one of these references do we read that God blessed the first day of the week and sanctified it. Additionally, not once in the entire Bible does it say: Remember the resurrection day to keep it holy.

It is a historic and accepted fact that all of these references were written decades after the cross. It is interesting to note that even after such a length of time had elapsed between the actual events and the recording of those events, these references do not once state that the seventh-day Sabbath was replaced by the first day of the week as the day of worship. The writers of the Bible were clearly not worshipping on the first day of the week; this is an unbiblical tradition that began gradually after the apostles' demise.

The verse usually used as an argument to prove that the seventh-day Sabbath was changed to the first day of the week is the one which states that the apostles met on the day of the resurrection. This verse is listed as item number (6),

where we read that the apostles were assembled for the fear of the Jews and not to celebrate Jesus' resurrection as a worship day. Quite to the contrary, at this time they did not even know or believe that Jesus had resurrected!

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen (Mark 16:14).

With passion, precision and boldness the apostle Paul would later confront every issue that was not theologically in agreement with what he had learned from Jesus Christ. He challenged all, regardless of who they were, exposing error and stating the correct biblical position. One glaring example was his anathema for compelling compliance to the Jewish ritual of circumcision. We can easily visualize such passion as we read Philippians 3:2-3:

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Paul knew that a single deviation from the truth could lead God's precious children away from the glorious gospel of grace, and He remained firm and faithful to the commission entrusted to him:

For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Thus, Paul continued keeping the Sabbath after His encounter with Jesus on the

road to Damascus. In light of what was just stated above, one would believe that Paul, who became a Christian after Jesus Christ's resurrection, as the result of a personal encounter with Him, would be definitive in declaring that the seventh-day Sabbath had been nullified and replaced by the first day of the week. One would surely expect clarity on that extremely important subject from someone like Paul, given his passionate personality and training as a theologian. As a Jew he tells this about himself:

My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee (Acts 26:4, 5).

A Jew, and even more notably a Pharisee, was especially meticulous when it came to this preeminent day of worship. In fact, the seventh-day Sabbath was observed with such inflexibility and severity that if it had been abolished, Paul would certainly have declared it. A passionate individual like him would have undoubtedly and clearly told his flock that the first day of the week had now become the avowed day of worship instead of the seventh-day Sabbath; but he does not do that.

The two verses listed in item number (7) in the list are not stating that on the first day of the week there would be a spiritual assembly when collection should be done as a congregation. Paul is stating the very opposite. *Each of you is to put aside and keep by him a sum in proportion of his gains* (The New English Bible). *Keep by him* means 'at home,' and not in some gathering so that no collections are done when Paul goes to Corinth.

In item number (8) the event occurs on Saturday night after the seventh-day Sabbath is over and the first day of the week commences and it goes on till midnight. It is a farewell gathering for Paul who is to depart the next day to visit other churches. The breaking of bread was a daily ritual of theirs and it also happened on this evening:

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart (Acts 2:46).

What Is The Memorial For The Resurrection?

The main reason given for the observance of the first day of the week is that it is said to be the memorial of the resurrection. Again, that is not a biblical position. The biblical memorial of the resurrection is baptism by submersion. We commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ during baptism, when we go underwater and then are raised from our submerged condition.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:1-6).

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ [HIS PRINCIPLE OF agape LOVE] (Galatians 3:27; emphasis added).

Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).

There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:21).

The Old Covenant Mindset Was Done Away With At The Cross

Keeping the law as a means to find favor with God and obtain salvation is the approach of the Old Covenant. It is the type of ingrained thinking that Jesus and the New Testament writers so intensely and with great difficulty attempted to overturn. The apostle Paul makes the distinction between the two Covenant mindsets when he compares Moses, who had the mindset of a servant, with Jesus, who had the mindset of a Son.

In Hebrews 3:1-11 we are admonished to take into consideration Jesus Christ as the one person who has something very special to teach us, and the comparison is made between His and Moses' understanding of God:

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house (Hebrews 3:1-2).

Jesus Christ was appointed by God and was faithful to God in the revelation He gave us of God's character of love. We see as we read further that His teachings have preeminent prominence over Moses' teachings because He Himself is Divine:

For this One [JESUS CHRIST] has been counted worthy of more glory

than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house (Hebrews 3:3).

Humanity is God's house for it is God who created humanity. As the builder of the house, Jesus has more Honor than the house. His testimony, therefore, is worthy of more honor than the testimony of Moses who was but a human being:

For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God (Hebrews 3:4).

Moses' Flawed Knowledge Of God

As we continue, we see that Moses was faithful to God's calling, but within the limited knowledge which he had of God. We see that his knowledge was flawed in that he interpreted everything, including the law, from the perspective of the principle of *good and evil*, the Old Covenant mindset. Moses, who represents all that have the same mindset, saw the Ten Commandment law as belonging to the system of arbitrary reward and punishment, and that outlook kept him in a condition of slavery. Moses and the people of the Old Testament served God out of fear and not out of love, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah who were translated. Jesus, on the other hand, had the mind of a Son, and served His Father out of love:

*And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house **as a servant**, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, **but Christ as a Son** over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end (Hebrews 3:5-6;*

emphasis added).

Notice Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if... the word *if* here refers not to works of the law, but *holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end*. We are to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the good news Jesus proclaimed to the human race, that we are the children of God, heirs according to the promise given to Abraham; we are God's house. We are loved, forgiven, accepted, and we are to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of such great news.

Moses Prophesied That One Would Come Whom We Should Hear

What does it mean in the above passage when it says that Moses' experience would be a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward? Those things which would be spoken afterward, according to Moses himself, would be the revelation of God's true character, and pointed to the future appearance of Jesus Christ who would reveal the Father:

The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' 'And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him' (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

That the above passage is a reference to Jesus Christ is confirmed by the fact that this passage is quoted by Peter in Acts 3:22-23, when he preached about Jesus Christ after Pentecost in Solomon's Portico:

... and that He may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:20-23).

Notice that Peter adds the words *in all things, whatever He says to you*. After quoting the above passage from Deuteronomy, Peter closes his speech with the following words:

To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities (Acts 3:26).

The entire world, and in particular those who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, must take heed to what Moses has stated. More specifically yet, the Christian world must come to know the true from the false Messiah, because God has told us clearly that it was Jesus Christ He was referring to as He spoke through Moses, whom Peter quoted.

Notice that Jesus is called a Servant in the above verse. There is a vast difference between Jesus' faithful servitude and Moses faithfulness as a servant. Moses' mindset of *a* servant makes him indeed a servant and He obeys God as a servant obeys a master out of fear. The apostle John confirms

Moses' partial knowledge of God when He said:

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:17-18).

This verse indicates that Moses did not entirely know grace and truth. Jesus' mind of a Servant makes Him a loved and loving Son who does what He sees His Father doing and who therefore, through *agape* love, always serves others just as the Father does. For this reason He is in the bosom of the Father in a way that Moses was not:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Phillipians 2:5-8).

Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner (John 5:19).

Jesus Himself explained to His disciples what His type of servitude means:

Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them

are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves (Luke 22:24–27).

The Law Came Through Moses

When prophesying about the coming Messiah, why did Moses say *Him you shall hear*? Why not ‘me’ you shall hear? Because what Jesus Christ had to give to the world was beyond what Moses could give. All that Moses gave the children of Israel was filtered through fear, through lack of understanding the love of God, through the principle of *good and evil*. That is why the people asked, in utter petrification, that they hear not again *the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die*. Here again is clearly seen their mindset of fearful servitude:

Then he [MOSES] took the book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient (Exodus 24:7).

Thus, it was with a mindset of abject fear that the children of Israel said *all that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient*. In complete fear they would attempt to be obedient to God in every way possible, but with that mindset they had no concept of God’s love whatsoever.

Be Not Afraid

Whenever an epiphany from the transcendent sphere occurs for humans it is always stated *do not be afraid* because we are so prone to fear from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The book of Hebrews, on the other hand, informs us that we are to have the very opposite frame of mind:

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

The apostle John succinctly informs us that without understanding God's *agape* love we will, with the old covenant mind, remain fearful of God. God, however, wants us to have the new covenant mind, which is the direct opposite of the old way of believing in Him:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves he who fears has not been made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

The book of Hebrews further points out that there was something wrong with the old Covenant:

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – ‘not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,

says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: 'I will put My laws into their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' In that He says, 'A new covenant' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:7-13).

Notice that the old covenant lost its value because the people did not continue in God's covenant. They did not continue to follow the God of love. To them, God became a harsh and exacting master, and obedience to the law became a dry exercise in obeying rules and regulations rather than obedience from a heart filled with love for God and appreciation for the wisdom of His law of love.

Grace And Truth Came Through Jesus Christ

God promised that the Messiah, Jesus, would turn the people away from their iniquities by giving them the correct knowledge of God and turning them from fear to love:

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:17-18).

If we take up again the passage from Hebrews 3 verses 7-11; 4:3, 4, we will see that it addresses this whole mindset of the children of Israel in the Old

Testament. Because of this mindset they could not enter into God's rest, which interestingly enough, is a reference to His holy Sabbath. They could not enter God's rest because they always went astray in their heart, and they have not known God's ways:

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me. And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest'...although all the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works' (Hebrews 3:7-11; 4:3, 4).

We Are Admonished To Believe In The God Of agape Love

We are admonished to not follow their example in the remaining verses of Hebrews chapter 3:12, 13:

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Please notice that the word *unbelief* here is used in the context of departing from the living God. It is not used in the context of believing in the existence

of God, but of departing from the living God who is the source of life, and not of death.

Good And Evil Teaches A Warped View Of God

The deceitfulness of sin is the lies from the principle of *good and evil*, and are the same lies about the character of God that Adam and Eve fell prey to. They are the lies which turned them away from God in fear.

For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.' For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief' (Hebrews 3:14-19).

Entering God's Sabbath rest can happen only through the true knowledge of His character, which the seventh day represents. As we continue into Hebrews chapter 4, we see that the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath is paramount in entering into God's rest, which is the rest that comes from the knowledge of His true character of *agape* love:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it (Hebrews

4:1-2).

Faith In God's Character Is Required In Order To Enter Into His Rest

The gospel was preached to the Israelites, but their hearing of the gospel was not mixed with faith. Again, what kind of faith does this refer to? The Israelites believed in God, and they had seen His miraculous works for forty years. The faith being addressed here has to do with the correct understanding of God, which they did not have.

For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: 'So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.' Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4:3).

We can enter into the rest that comes from the correct knowledge of God's unconditional love only when we understand and accept the teachings of Jesus Christ, who said:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

Jesus promises to give us rest from the hard labor involved in the servitude to God through the fear that Satan's reward and punishment system engenders. He showed us that we may call our heavenly Father Abba, daddy, whose yoke is His *agape* love:

Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:29–30).

Some people see the yoke as a burden, but a yoke is designed to lighten a burden and make it easier to bear. We may be yoked to Christ and he takes the weight of *good and evil* away by giving the knowledge of *agape* love, thus lightening our burden.

There Remains A Sabbath Rest For The People Of God

As we have already discussed in this chapter, the reason God rested on the seventh day was because through Creation He had demonstrated His *agape* love. None can enter, or join God in His rest, unless they have the knowledge and belief that God's character of *agape* love has no violence:

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works'; And again in this place: 'They shall not enter My rest' (Hebrews 4:4–5)

The reason God states in the above verse that *they shall not enter His rest*, is because they did not believe in His character of *agape* love of nonviolence that the seventh-day Sabbath rest represented. This was stated after the cross. It is impossible to rest when fear is present.

In the next passage we see that those who did not enter into God's rest did not enter because of disobedience to the truth regarding His character. We are told, however, that in the future some will enter it:

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, 'Today,' after such a long time, as it has been said: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts' (Hebrews 4:6-7).

Therefore for us, to whom this promise is given, let us not harden our hearts to the truth of God's nature of *agape* love.

The True Knowledge Of God Is Needed In Order To Keep The Law

God has revealed things to us, things that are necessary for us to keep the law of love. The revelation involved here is that God Himself is *agape* love, and that is the knowledge that is necessary for us to keep the law of *agape* love:

The secrets things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deutoronomy 29:29).

There Is Nothing Left If The Knowledge Of God's Unconditional Love Is Rejected

We are told that those who once knew God's love and now no longer believe it have a very bleak future indeed. Since they have decidedly rejected that God is *agape* love, all they have to look forward to is the inevitable and irrevocable ultimate damnation. This finality is reached when the truth has been proclaimed and finally rejected. In fact, that is the condition that Lucifer and his angels find themselves in. They were once enlightened and had tasted the heavenly gift:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries (Hebrews 10 :26-27).

Judas is another example of someone who did not believe in God's unconditional love. Jesus tried to let him know, even up to the very end by calling him *friend*, thus showing him that he was accepted and forgiven. Judas could not believe it, and took his own life. Peter on the other hand, although he wept bitterly at his own betrayal of Jesus, was assured by the look of love the Savior gave him after the three denials, and he knew that he had been forgiven.

The word *adversaries* in the verse above is the Greek word *hupenantios*, *hoop-en-an-tee'-os*. The definition of that word is as follows, from Strong's

Concordance: “From G5259 and G1727; under (covertly) contrary to, that is, opposed or (as noun) an opponent: – adversary, against.” The meaning here refers to someone who is opposed to the truth, or contrary to it, rather than an enemy. This Greek word is used only one more time in the New Testament:

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary [HUPENANTIOS] to us. And He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14; emphasis added).

Joshua Is a Type Of Jesus, The One Who Leads Us Into True Rest

The children of Israel did eventually enter into Canaan, the Promised Land, under the leadership of Joshua, who was a type of Jesus. Jesus will lead the spiritual children of Israel into the true spiritual Promised Land, of which the first one was only a type:

For if Joshua had given them rest then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience (Hebrews 4:8-11).

Notice that those who enter into God’s rest will also cease from their works, as God ceased from His works on the seventh day. Why is that so? Those who enter into the rest that comes from the knowledge of God’s character will cease from trying to appease an angry and exacting God, and will enter

into a filial relationship with the Father. They will no longer serve God under harsh servitude. Knowing that they are loved unconditionally will so change their hearts that they will no longer live in constant fear of rejection and punishment, but will live in an atmosphere of continual grace and acceptance with God. They will cease also from the works of the law of *good and evil*.

The Sabbath Principle Is Eternal As God's Character Is Eternal

From the first Sabbath day forward into eternity this twenty-four-time period that was brought into existence at Creation will always be commemorated as the Creator God's Sabbath:

For behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind...The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,' says the Lord...For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the Lord, 'so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the Lord (Isaiah 65:17, 25; 66: 22, 23).

When we look at the Sabbath from this perspective and with a spiritual mind dwell on this sacred time period, we will never claim that God is a destroyer. Once again, we are without excuse for not knowing that God is the Creator and not the Destroyer.

The Majority Of All Believers In God Claim That He Is Both The Creator And The Destroyer

When we consider the size of the world population, Sabbatharians are a small minority. But among this minority there is an even smaller minority who believe that the true reason for worshipping on the seventh-day Sabbath is grounded on what has been stated so far: 1) that God is *agape* love, and that because of His *agape* love He cannot be arbitrarily involved in any acts of destruction and death; 2) all such occurrences of violence are from the effects of sin and are intertwined with Satan's principle, as represented by *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Therefore, all human beings who are involved in death and destruction, knowingly or unknowingly, are adhering to Satan's principle of *good and evil*, for God is not arbitrarily involved in any such activities. As stated, only a token minority of Sabbatharians have this belief.

The majority of Sabbatharians, like their predecessors in the time of Christ, espouse the traditional view that God is both the Creator and Destroyer. They are in agreement, as far as this particular belief is concerned, with those who worship on Sunday, the first day of the week. Sunday is clearly a day of worship which is adhered to by tradition and not from a biblical standpoint. Regardless of which day of the week God is worshiped, however, there is an overwhelming commonality in all the religions of the world, and that is that God is both the Creator and also the Destroyer.

What Day And What Belief Would Jesus Classify As Traditional, The First Day Of The Week, Or The Sabbatarians' Belief That God Is The Destroyer?

Jesus classified the belief that God is both Creator and Destroyer as tradition and not divine revelation, irrespective of the day of worship issue. The Bible reveals that the flawed belief that God is both Creator and Destroyer will be a common ground, uniting all believers and unbelievers in a common cause. This issue will be the agent that will cause a global unification involving all of humanity. This may at present appear unfeasible, given that today's fragmented religious community has branched out into so many groups that it is almost impossible to enumerate its diversity. In addition one may wonder what believers and unbelievers could possibly have in common that would cause them to unite.

Referring to the time just before His second advent, Jesus told us that we are to pay particular attention to the fact that we are not to be deceived. He warned us that under no circumstances whatsoever must we allow ourselves to be duped into what many will claim, in God's name, to be God's directives. What this means is that some will claim that they, followers of God, are privileged to know His teachings and as such they will demand that everyone conform to those teachings. Would Jesus classify such people as adhering to deceptive tradition, a tradition that is not divinely mandated? It would appear that this was indeed the first and foremost essence of Jesus' warning:

Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 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 (Matthew 24:4-8).

If all of Jesus' statements in the above passage are referring to only the beginning of sorrows, what will the earth be like when the closing stages of sorrows will have reached their climax? The picture given here is one in which unimaginable chaos will prevail in every area of human existence. When the earth reaches such a state, these conditions will be thought to be punishments from God upon the inhabitants of the earth. It will be widely believed that God is punishing us for the prevalence of evil in our midst and for those things that are not in conformity to His teachings.

Worship Will Become Mandatory To Appease A God Supposedly Angry At Evildoers

The Bible paints a scenario in which those believers in God who have not understood His true character will not only demand that mandatory worship be instituted, but that it be according to what they believe. They will think that the reason for the destruction happening on the earth is the prevalence of all evil such as is not in conformity to their belief. They will reason that all activities contrary to God's directives must be stopped. They will firmly believe that the methods used as punishment on the so-called ungodly are immaterial. Each religious group will have its own belief system, and each will consider as evil those who do not adhere to their respective belief. The one thing they will have in common is that the God of violence they worship allows them to utilize violence on those they perceive to be evildoers. Force and execution will be the order of the day toward actual or perceived evil.

The only general consensus among these believers is the certainty that God takes care of evildoers by punishing them with whatever methods are required. It will be widely believed that the earth is experiencing the violent wrath of God due to humanity's sinful activities. Evil will undergo such a crescendo on planet earth and will reach such a climax that drastic action will be required. Religionists will demand that mandatory worship be instituted on a global scale, because they think God is globally punishing the inhabitants of the earth with global chaos. They will blame the pain and suffering and general chaotic

condition of the earth on those whom they perceive to be evildoers and will accuse them of bringing the wrath of God upon the world.

Some Will Claim Freedom Of Choice

There will be some who will not want to be forced into mandatory worship but who wish to live their spiritual lives in the way they deem appropriate. They will claim that this is a personal matter between them and their God. This claim will not be acceptable to a majority who demand that God has to be worshipped in a certain way. The majority will say that this is an intolerable and objectionable way of worship which denies what God wants and as such is therefore evil, and is unacceptable to God and to them. They will further hold that it is because of such heresy that God is punishing the world through all kinds of disasters.

The scribes, who were the religious scholars of their time, and the Pharisees, who were the conservative expositors of the Bible, confronted Jesus in connection with one of their important traditions, one that had nothing to do with the commandments of God. Jesus ignored their question on the particular ritualistic practice they challenged Him on. What He did instead was focus on the commandment of God that through their tradition they had nullified.

The same has been done to God's preeminent commandment that was instituted to reveal His essence and that had its origin during creation week. A traditional belief has supplanted the truth as to why the seventh-day Sabbath was given. This tradition has its roots in Satan's principle from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and is still prevailing today.

If Jesus were here with us today, would He inform us with grave concern and disappointment that we have grossly erred in replacing the Seventh-day Sabbath with a day He never instituted, authorized or sanctioned? He would, most likely with deep sadness, also inform Sabbatarians that they have desecrated the sacredness of the day He personally created to be a memorial to the essence of God, by believing in a tradition that has nothing to do with Him or His Father. This tradition had its origin in the Garden of Eden and

was birthed when Adam and Eve obeyed Satan and ate from *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This tradition upholds the principle that teaches that the Lord of the Sabbath is both the Creator and the Destroyer.

Jesus would probably be far more displeased and dismayed with the Sabbatharians than with any other day of the week worshippers. Why would that be the case, since the former are already Sabbath worshippers? Which group's tradition would He most likely address first, the Sabbatharians' or the first day of the week worshippers'? Would He address present-day Sabbath keepers in the same manner He addressed Sabbath worshippers two thousand years ago when He said *why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition (Matthew 15:3, 6)*. Thus, even though the context of this passage refers to the fifth commandment which states, *Honor your father and your mother (Exodus 20:12)*, the desecration of the principle of *agape* love is nullified by their tradition in both the commandments.

Would He say to Sabbatharians, 'why do you believe that the God of *agape* love is also the Destroyer? How can you believe such an error, given that the express reason for which the Sabbath was instituted was so that it would serve as a memorial of God's *agape* love, a memorial to confirm that God is not responsible for evil, so that when destruction happens you may be reminded of its meaning?'

In His ministry, Jesus went first to the scribes and Pharisees and all of their followers in the Jewish faith because to them were committed the oracles of God (*Romans 3:3*). Keeping in mind that they adhered to the Sabbath commandment with uttermost sincerity, it is especially interesting to note that it was with them that Jesus faced the gravest challenges, because they thought they knew God, when in fact they did not know the Lord of the Sabbath of the Bible. They did not know the Lord of the Sabbath for the simple reason that they had completely lost the spiritual significance of the Sabbath: that God is *agape* love in whom there is no violence. The God they worshipped on the right day was the traditional gods that other belief systems had, and which had originated with Satan.

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus saying, 'Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' He answered and said to them, 'Why do you transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and mother;' and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God' – 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 'Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men' (Matthew 15:1-9).

The commandments of men that they taught as doctrines of God in essence were that God is both the Creator and Destroyer. All men believe the same error because all religions believe and teach this lie.

The Gospel Of The Kingdom Of God Is His law Of agape Love Which Is Antithetical To Satan's Kingdom Rule Of Law

The fundamental, God-centered reason for the seventh-day Sabbath worship is overwhelmingly rejected by believers and unbelievers alike. God created the seventh day as a memorial to His character of nonviolence. Satan has taken the world captive in denying the gospel of the kingdom which is God's nonviolent character of *agape* love. The results of violence that have permeated the world speak volumes in favor of the God of nonviolence, because the majority of the world that believes in violence believes that their God is violent.

How different would life be on planet earth if the world's religions and in particular the Christian community accepted the nonviolent nature of God's *agape* love and lived it! The truth about the character of God is the last message to go out to humanity before the world comes to an end through the violence that is inherent in the principle of *good and evil*:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

Satan understandably does not want the end to come because he wants to continue to be *the prince of this world (Jn.14:30)* and carry on his evil work on our world and its inhabitants. He does not want to see his kingdom come to an end for he delights in making God and all of His earthly children suffer by the carnage that is perpetrated under his law of violence that governs his kingdom.

Conversely, our God wants all this to come to an end; therefore we have been commissioned to preach this gospel of the kingdom. This preaching involves our demonstrating the gospel of the kingdom, as a witness to all the nations. When this gospel of the kingdom is demonstrated in our lives as a witness to all the nations, *then the end will come (Matthew 24:14)*, according to Jesus

Christ.

This gospel of the kingdom that Jesus is referring to needs to be comprehended and apprehended before we can demonstrate it as a witness to all the nations. As we scrutinize and analyze the totality of the life, death, resurrection and the heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ, we find one dominant subject matter is His all consuming passion, and that is the gospel of the kingdom. The object of His fervent dedication is to reveal to everyone, as the light of the world, the character of the God of the universe. Once this is known and lived then we should not abide in darkness. The darkness that Jesus wants to eradicate is the totality of Satan's lies duping us into believing that God is both Creator and Destroyer. This certainly is not the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore with a passionate plea to all of us, He reveals the God of the universe and the gospel of the kingdom.

Then Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (John 12:44-50).

The Gospel Is God-Centered And Is The Good News About God

The gospel of the kingdom is all about God, about His character of *agape* love; it is not about us. We have made it all about us when in reality it is all about God. It is God centered, not man centered. The good news is about how the kingdom of God functions and about how radically different it is from the way the kingdom of Satan operates.

Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man (Genesis 9:6).

All who have not understood the gospel of the kingdom, God's nonviolent character of *agape* love, will be violent and will shed man's blood. Their own blood shall in turn be shed by men who believe in the violent principle of Satan. This is the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth principle, and their blood shall be shed by those who also believe in violence.

With a mind that has been sealed by the belief that God the Creator is also the Destroyer, they will use violence when violence is used against them and will blatantly refute Jesus' claim:

But I tell you not to resist an evil person, but whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also (Matt. 5:39).

Such passive reaction, as taught by Jesus, becomes impossible in the lives of those who believe in the principle of violence. Such cannot comprehend the kingdom of God unless they believe these words of Paul:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5).

Only Jesus Christ Taught And Lived The Nonviolent agape Love Principle Of God

The principle, upon which the seventh-day Sabbath of Creation week is founded, was affirmed by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, and confirmed by what the gospel of the kingdom is. The cross ratified that the essence of God is *agape* love, and proved that He never has nor ever will utilize Satan's principle to either defeat or punish him nor his followers.

Both the creation of the seventh-day Sabbath and the cross prove in no uncertain terms that this is the gospel of the kingdom. When we understand and demonstrate this gospel of the kingdom in our lives, in the horizontal dimension, then the passage *this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14)*, will be fulfilled.

Jesus Christ promised that when we finally choose to live by the seventh-day Sabbath principle of the gospel of the kingdom that He will come for us:

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work (Revelation 22:12).

Jesus is coming to give the reward of eternal life to those who chose to live by *the tree of life* principle. They will be translated without experiencing death. The reward that Jesus gives is inherent in the work of demonstrating God's *agape* love in our lives in the horizontal dimension. This reward is given without the possibility of Satan obstructing its beneficence, for once we choose to enter God's kingdom principle in this final phase of world history, Satan no longer will have the power of death over us. This reward is not some arbitrary act

of God but is the innate result of the works of *agape* love in the lives of His children. *He [JESUS CHRIST] who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).*

This is also our longingly passionate response, our desire and plea.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Revelation 22:21).



About the Author

Oswald and Denice Grant's ministry, Grace Unlimited Ministries, is entirely devoted to the ministry of bringing reconciliation between man and God by removing the lies that humanity has believed about God, lies which promote the fear that keep us separated from Him.

We believe that Jesus Christ alone has given, and is still giving us, the true revelation of God. The uniqueness of Jesus' insight into the Father transcends all previous and subsequent representations of God that do not harmonize with His characterization of the Father's character of love.

We believe that all scripture must be understood in the light of Jesus' revelation of the character of God, and that it must harmonize with the principle so clearly demonstrated on the cross: self-sacrificing, unconditional love.

We believe that God loves the whole world. Jesus, the seed that came to the world through the seed of Abraham, is the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. That encompasses all, without distinction of color, race, creed, or any other barriers that may exist between the peoples of the earth.

We also believe that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. As seen through Jesus Christ, who came to reveal Him, God is a pure being without mixture of good and evil. God is life. God is love. God is light.

We believe that the foundational cause of Lucifer's fall was his rebellion against God's eternal law of agape love. Lucifer believed that God's law was inefficient in keeping order in the universe and that it removed one's freedom of choice. He devised an alternative law which was a mixture of light and darkness and which came to be represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Lucifer's law is the law of arbitrary reward and punishment, and it uses violence as motivation for order keeping. Through bribes and threats of punishment Lucifer has ruled the earth for six thousand years.

We believe that once God's love is seen for what it truly is, and once Satan's cruel and harsh government is understood in its fulness, a segment of the human race will reject him, and then he will be crushed under our feet (Romans 16:20).

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Also by Oswald and Denice Grant

The God on Trial Series

Very few biblical scholars have given a satisfactory explanation of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. **The God on Trial Series**, by Oswald and Denice Grant, deals with Satan's rebellion against God and explains the meaning of the Tree of Life and of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the context of the war between the Creator and the Covering Cherub. Placed in the middle of the Garden of Eden, the two trees symbolically represent the very issues involved in the war (GR. *polemos*) between God and Satan, and explain what sin really is and how the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil plays a part in it. It also extricates God's kingdom from Satan's kingdom, and gives credit to each where credit is due. These books take away the confusion that has existed about God's true character of light, and clear His name from any participation in Satan's kingdom of darkness, destruction, and death.

The first book in **The God on Trial Series**, *The Demonization of God Unmasked* is followed by *God on Trial: Have We Been Lied To? Is God a Killer?* and *The Wrath of God Unmasked*. Together, these three books open a completely different view of God to the reader by lifting the veil of lies that have obscured his view of God. They separate the truth that emanates from the Tree of Life from the lies that are deeply embedded in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Ultimately, with the upcoming *seal* and *mark* spoken of in the Book of Revelation, every one of us will be eating from one of these two Trees. We are called to make a choice, and these books provide the information needed to make such a choice. A must read for the seeker of the true God!



GOD ON TRIAL

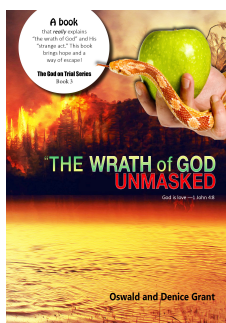
Have we been lied to?
Is God a Killer?

OSWALD AND DENICE GRANT

God on Trial: Have We Been Lied To? Is God a Killer?

The second book in the God on Trial Series, *God on Trial: Have We Been Lied To? Is God a Killer?* opens the curtain wide, and clearly shows what Lucifer's rebellion against God was really all about. Pride? It goes much deeper than that! This book takes the reader step by step through the issues involved in the rebellion, and soon one realizes that the world has been turned upside down

by that one Tree peddled by the serpent. What seemed like sensible reality now appears to be a monstrous invention by a deranged super genius who has surreptitiously managed to make us all his accomplices and partners in crime. Be prepared for a huge paradigm shift!



The Wrath of God Unmasked

Perhaps one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented topics in the Bible, “the wrath of God” has to harmonize with Jesus Christ’s revelation God, otherwise it become a contradiction. “The wrath of God” is a biblical term that cannot be taken literally, just like any other terms and expressions cannot either. This book tackles “the wrath of God” by allowing the Bible itself to

provide us the answers, looking at examples from the past, digging deep into the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words, and doing a careful study of Romans chapter one. What emerges is a completely different picture of “the wrath of God” than what one would expect. The dots finally seem to connect and bring the harmonious whole into focus. God can still be love in the context of a true understanding of “the wrath of God;” and the gospel—the good news—can still be good news indeed!

