

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH : PART 1

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An Alleged Contradiction In The Old Testament, King David Angers The Lord By Taking A Census Of Israel, Contradictions Often Result From Our Own Lack Of Understanding Of The Bible, God Is Not The Author Of Confusion, God Designed Everything In Harmony And Order, Don't Lean To Your Own Understanding, Atheists And Bible Haters, Ask God For Wisdom Of His Spirit, Why Some Nonbelievers Look For Alleged Errors In The Bible, God Will Choose Their Delusions, Kings Ahab And Jehoshaphat Lying Spirit And Micaiah, Jezebel Is Eaten By Dogs, Strong Delusion, Minor Numerical Errors, Bible Interprets Itself, Diligently Read And Study God's Word In Order To Understand It, Hidden Treasures Of God's Word, Rightly Divide The Word Of Truth, Compare Scripture With Scripture, Anointing Of The Holy Spirit, Blindness Of The Jews, Don't Try To Force God's Word To Fit What You Want To Believe, A False Balance Is An Abomination To The Lord, Begin By Looking For Interpretive Clues In The Same Chapter Or Book First, Babylon The Great And Many Waters, Seeing What We Want To See, Many Years Of Diligently Reading God's Word, Holy Spirit Will Bring God's Word To Our Remembrance, Value Of Hebrew And Greek Lexicons, King David Angers God By Being Self-Confident And Trusting In His Military Might, Jealous God Of Israelites, Israelites Repeatedly Backslid And Worshipped False Gods, Foolishness Of Trusting In The Arm Of Flesh, Walk Humbly Before The Lord

Some time ago I received a question via an email message from a certain woman who was apparently having a difficult time with understanding a few Scriptures from a particular story that is found in the Old Testament. Following is the brief message that she sent to me at that time:

----- Begin Quote -----

How do you interpret the following scriptures written by two different authors but speaking of the same event?

2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1

----- End Of Quote -----

Upon examining the actual text of the two verses which this woman mentions in her message, it is easy to see why she may have become confused. For a novice reader of God's Word, at first glance, it would appear that there is a contradiction in the verses. But is there really? Consider the following:

"And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."
2 Samuel 24:1, KJV

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

1 Chronicles 21:1, KJV

On the surface, it might appear to some people that these verses are speaking of the very same incident, yet saying something quite different. However, this is definitely not the case. As I point out in a few of my articles, whenever there seems to be any contradiction, it is usually not in the Word of God itself, but rather in our understanding of it. The Lord does not contradict Himself. Neither does He purposely confuse us. In fact, we are specifically told by the Apostle Paul in his discussion concerning the Gift of Tongues, that God is not the author of confusion, as we see here:

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

1 Corinthians 14:33, KJV

We can apply this principle, not only to the Gifts of the Spirit, but to everything that God says and does. The Grand Design of the Universe clearly demonstrates that the Lord is the Author of harmony and order, and not the author of chaos and confusion. This harmony and order is found in the story of Creation in the Book of Genesis, and it is also found in other parts of the Bible as well. For example, consider how the Lord meticulously designed the orbits of the Sun, stars and planets:

"[To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.] The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Psalms 19:1-6, KJV

At the end of his discourse regarding the Gifts of the Spirit, the Apostle Paul again tells us the following:

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

1 Corinthians 14:40, KJV

This then should be the approach which we use whenever we engage in a study of God's Word. As I often state throughout my articles, whenever there is something that we don't quite understand in the Bible, the worst thing that we can do is to lean to our own understanding, and to jump to what may be hasty and erroneous conclusions. In the Book of Proverbs we read the following:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."
Proverbs 18:13, KJV

This is what a lot of atheists and Bible haters do. Because they don't have the Spirit and Wisdom of the Lord, they find certain verses of Scripture which they foolishly claim are blatant contradictions in the Bible. If these people would seek the Lord with a sincere heart, and an honest desire for the Truth, He would be more than happy to reveal it to them. After all, as Jesus teaches us in the Gospels:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
Matthew 7:7-11, KJV

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"
Luke 11:9-13, KJV

In his Epistle, the Apostle James also advises us to ask the Lord for His Wisdom, as we see by this verse:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
James 1:5, KJV

Sadly, atheists and Bible haters don't do this, because they are not really interested in the Truth. Instead, they read the Bible with a critical eye just looking for errors of one sort or another. Because they reject the Bible as being God's inspired Word, they intentionally want to be convinced that it is full of mistakes, contradictions and inaccuracies. One of the reasons why they do this, is because it is the only way in which they can seemingly justify their sin of unbelief and their ungodly lifestyle. While these foolish people may think that they are outsmarting God through this approach, what they apparently don't realize is that God is the one who is really pulling the wool over their eyes. In other words, if they really want to be deceived, the Lord will allow them to be deceived. Furthermore, we are told that He will choose their delusions for them, as we see here:

"I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before

mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."
Isaiah 66:4, KJV

One good example which demonstrates this lesson can be found in 1 Kings 22, which concerns the defeat of evil King Ahab. The gist of this story is that King Jehoshaphat -- who ruled the southern kingdom of Judah from Jerusalem -- went to see King Ahab -- who ruled the northern kingdom of Israel from Samaria.

This is the same King Ahab and Queen Jezebel who persecuted the Lord's Prophet Elijah, and all of the other Prophets of the Lord. God was very upset with Ahab and Jezebel because of their many evil doings, all of which are recorded in 1 Kings chapters sixteen through twenty-two. In this particular story, Ahab reveals his plans to attack Ben-hadad, who is the king of Syria. Being a righteous man in some regards, King Jehoshaphat asks Ahab if he has first sought the Lord's Will regarding the matter.

Of course, being as evil as he was, King Ahab really couldn't have cared less what the Lord thought. However, because Ahab wanted Jehoshaphat to join him in battle at Ramoth-gilead, he decided to appease him by calling for his prophets. It is at this point in the story that we are given a behind-the-scenes view of what was really going on in the Spirit World in the Realm of the Heavenly Courts. Consider these verses:

"And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee."

1 Kings 22:19-23, KJV

The previous words were spoken to these two kings by a true Prophet of God by the name of Micaiah. Because he faithfully obeyed the Lord, Micaiah was cast into prison by evil King Ahab. As the story continues, Ahab and Jehoshaphat engage in battle against King Ben-hadad of Syria. During the course of the battle, one of King Beh-hadad's archers shoots an arrow up into the air by chance. Because of the Lord's Will, this arrow finds its mark. Thus, King Ahab is mortally wounded and dies that same day. As had been prophesied, Ahab's blood was licked up by the dogs when it was washed out of his chariot. Later, his evil wife -- Queen Jezebel -- was also eaten by dogs.

The main lesson to consider here is that because King Ahab leaned upon his own strength and wisdom -- because he did not care what the Lord thought -- God purposely allowed him to be deceived by permitting one of His many Ministering Spirits to go and speak lies through the mouths of Ahab's prophets. That

spirit told King Ahab exactly what he wanted to hear. A few other excellent verses regarding the topic of delusion are the following:

". . . because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"
2 Thessalonians 2:10b-11, KJV

Before continuing, allow me to mention that there is in fact one exception to the rule regarding Biblical contradictions. The truth of the matter is that it is indefensible to claim that there are no errors when it involves numbers and totals that are found in some of the Old Testament stories. While the original autographs may have been precise, over the years as manuscripts were duplicated and distributed by copyists, some minor errors did creep into the text. Perhaps a certain number was smudged and unreadable, so the copyist simply made an educated guess. However, in my opinion, these are really minor discrepancies which do not affect the core doctrines of our faith in any significant way.

As I have often said, it is my personal belief that the Bible is for the most part self-interpreting. In other words, if we approach it in the right way, it explains itself. However, in order to know and understand this, it is imperative that we undertake a lot of reading. Otherwise, we will never make the right connections, and the Truth will evade us at every turn. As I point out in "Study, Work and Don't Be Ashamed", we must read, read, read, and study, study study. If we do this, if we take the time to diligently study God's Word, then He will most certainly reward us with pearls of great price; that is with the Truths of His Word. Consider what Jesus had to say in the Gospel of Matthew:

"Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."
Matthew 13:52, KJV

I can tell you from many years of personal experience that the Word of God is full of many wonderful, hidden treasures which will awe and inspire you; but you won't find a single one if you do not become a gold miner and search for God's Good Gold. In his Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul also admonishes us with the following:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

We cannot possibly rightly divide -- or correctly understand and teach -- God's Word, unless we take the time to read and study it and diligently compare Scripture with Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is actually the key. Without God's anointing of the Holy Spirit, we will simply read the Bible with a darkened mind, as a lot of people tend to do. We will gain very little understanding whatsoever. We will be similar to the unbelieving Jews who have studied the Scriptures for millennia, and yet who still

cannot see their Messiah in the pages of the New Testament. This sad tragedy is revealed in verses such as the following:

"(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."
Romans 11:8, 25, KJV

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"
Ephesians 4:18, KJV

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."
Matthew 13:10-16, KJV

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
Matthew 15:14, KJV

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! . . . Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."
Matthew 23:16, 24, KJV

"And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."
Mark 3:5, KJV

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind

also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

John 9:39-41, KJV

However, once we do receive the precious Gift of the Spirit, and begin to become familiar with God's Word, He will then be able to speak to us through it. He will show us where the different pieces of His Word puzzle are which fit together. The last thing we want to do is to try to force the pieces together. Just like a jigsaw puzzle, if we try to force the Word of God to fit what we want to believe, it simply won't work. Not only will it look ugly and confusing, but it will also be a false, unbalanced understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures. I am reminded of this verse:

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight."

Proverbs 11:1, KJV

In solving the Scriptural puzzle -- which I personally like to view as a CrossWord puzzle, being as it is God's Word and we are saved by the Cross of Christ -- we should first begin by looking in the same chapter for verses which may help to explain those verses with which we are having some trouble. If we are unable to find an immediate answer there, perhaps the answer will be found somewhere in the same Book. If not, then we should expand our search to include other Books of the Bible as well. Let me give you a small, easy example. In the Book of Revelation we find the following verse regarding the mystery woman, Babylon the Great:

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:"

Revelation 17:1, KJV

Exactly what is meant by "many waters"? In this case, John has made the answer very easy for us to find, because it is contained in the very same chapter. Only fourteen verses later we read the following in verse fifteen:

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Revelation 17:15, KJV

Thus we see that by simply reading this entire chapter, we now know exactly what is meant by the phrase "many waters". If you are interested in acquiring a deeper understanding regarding my personal views regarding the possible identity of Babylon the Great, please refer to the series entitled "Revelation's Babylon the Great".

Amazingly, I have come across certain writers who -- despite the fact that John clearly informs us what the "many waters" represent -- offer other explanations. As I stated a moment ago, it is foolish -- and in fact, dangerous -- to try to force an interpretation, simply because that is what we want to believe. If we begin our study of God's Word with notions of what we already want to believe, then we are really just

wasting our time, because we will only see what we want to see and nothing else. We will see and understand God's Word through interpretive filters of our own devising.

Of course, for this study approach to successfully work for us, as I mentioned earlier, we must be rather familiar with the Bible, so that the Lord can quicken things to us by His Spirit. This is not something that happens overnight. I can tell you from personal experience that many years of study are required; and even one reading of the Bible will not be sufficient. However, with time, as we become familiar with the Scriptures, the Lord will begin to link verses together for us, and bring them to our minds. That God can and will do this for us, is promised to us by Jesus Himself, who says the following in the Gospel of John:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:13, KJV

In addition to the previous pointers, I also highly encourage you to acquire a computer Bible program for your particular operating system -- Macintosh, Windows, Linux, etc., -- which includes both Hebrew and Greek lexicons. There are a lot of different Bible programs now available -- both commercial and free programs -- which include these lexicons. Personally, I have been using the free variety of the Macintosh version of a Bible program called Online Bible for many years now. Years ago, I purchased the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon and Thayer's Greek English Lexicon as add-on modules for about ten dollars each. Trust me when I say that you will discover Hebrew and Greek lexicons to be invaluable tools when you begin your own serious studies of the Holy Scriptures. Please bear in mind, however, that they may contain a certain amount of doctrinal teaching.

Having now explained to you the basic method we should employ in our endeavor to understand God's Word, and without further ado, let us begin to more closely examine what is occurring in these verses from the Books of 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicles. Allow me to quote them one more time to refresh your memory:

"And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."

2 Samuel 24:1, KJV

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

1 Chronicles 21:1, KJV

If you read these chapters in their entirety, you will see that the Lord is upset with King David. The reason why He is upset, is because David appears to have become a bit cocky

and self-confident, and he has begun to trust in the arm of flesh; that is, in his military might. If there is one thing that the Lord was constantly endeavoring to teach the ancient Israelites, it was to trust in Him as their sole King, Lord, Divine Protector and Provider. We are told a number of times in the Old Testament that the Lord is a jealous God. Please consider the following verses:

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"
Exodus 20:5, KJV

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:"
Exodus 34:14, KJV

"For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."
Deuteronomy 4:24, KJV

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,"
Deuteronomy 5:9, KJV

"(For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."
Deuteronomy 6:15, KJV

However, time and time again, the kings of Israel and Judah would rebel and try to do things their own way, just as the above example with evil King Ahab demonstrates. They would try to form their own counsel, wage their own battles, make alliances with Assyria or Egypt, etc. Each time that they did this, the Lord would let them fall flat on their faces. This was in addition to the fact that they would backslide from the Lord, and worship the false gods of the nations which surrounded them. This latter sin repeatedly resulted in the Israelites being invaded, conquered, and sometimes enslaved by their enemies. I discuss these subjects more at length in such series as "The Children of God and Politics" and "The Fruits of Disobedience".

The main point to consider is that whether it was thousands of years ago or today, the Lord desires that we trust solely in Him, and that we don't lean on the arm of flesh, just as the previous verse from the Book of Proverbs advises us to do. Following are some additional verses which deal with this very same topic:

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."
Psalms 20:7, KJV

"With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."
2 Chronicles 32:8, KJV

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

Jeremiah 17:5, KJV

The minute that we become haughty and self-confident, we are headed for serious trouble with the Lord. The minute that we become lifted up in our foolish pride, watch out! God will not tolerate this kind of behavior, and He will not hesitate to smack us down, because He wants us to walk humbly before Him. Consider the following verses:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Proverbs 16:18, KJV

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

Luke 17:10, KJV

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30, KJV

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:1-4, KJV

"Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Matthew 23:10-12, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH : PART 2

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Walk Humbly Before The Lord And Our Christian Brethren, Give Glory To God Alone, God Uses Weak Despised Foolish Things Of The World, Well-Dressed Preachers With Their Megachurches, Gideon Defeats Midianites With Small Band Of Three Hundred Men, Victory By The Lord's Spirit, Trust In God And Not Arm Of Flesh And Personal Ability, God Chose Israelites Because They Were Few In Number, Motivated By Pride King David Takes A Census Of Israel, David Has Slain Ten Thousands, Heavenly Government In Isaiah And Revelation, Different Levels Of Authority And Responsibility, Jesus Sits On His Own Throne On The Right Hand Of God The Father, Beasts And Twenty-Four Elders, Seven Spirits And Archangels, Angels And Ministering Spirits, Messengers And Warriors, Archangel Michael And The Devil Battle In Heaven, God Created All Things Through Jesus

Continuing our discussion from part one, following are some additional verses where we also are admonished to walk humbly before the Lord, and before our Christian brethren as well:

"And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
Luke 14:7-11, KJV

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
James 4:6-10, KJV

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"
1 Peter 5:3-6, KJV

As we learned in part one, the God of Israel is a jealous God, and He will have no other gods before Him. That must, by necessity, likewise include the false gods of human pride and ego. He will not share His glory with another. As these additional verses reveal, all glory belongs to God alone,

and not to man, who is but a worm:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
1 Corinthians 1:27-31, KJV

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;"
1 Corinthians 3:21, KJV

"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"
1 Corinthians 4:6-7, KJV

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"
1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth . . . Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
1 Corinthians 10:17-18, 31, KJV

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."
2 Corinthians 4:5, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
2 Corinthians 10:17, KJV

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."
2 Corinthians 12:5-6, KJV

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."
Galatians 5:26, KJV

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
Galatians 6:14, KJV

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of

others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."

1 Thessalonians 2:6, KJV

"How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?"

Job 25:6, KJV

"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

Psalms 22:6, KJV

As the previous verses from the Apostle Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians reveal, God doesn't specialize in numbers. He seems to prefer using the weak, the poor, the downtrodden, the despised, the foolish, the uneducated, and those people who realize that they are nothing without Him. Compare this with our modern, high-profile, well-dressed, rich, popular, super-educated preachers with their richly decorated churches and megachurches, and one must really begin to wonder where we got off-track. If you would like to study more extensively regarding this topic, please consider reading such articles as "The Only Credentials You Need!", "So You Really Think You Are So Humble" and "The Wisdom of God Versus the Philosophy of Men".

In contrast, a prime example of the Strength and Power of God at work in a few can be found in the story of Gideon. You can read about it in Judges chapters six through eight. For those of you who may not know this story, the Lord raised up Gideon to deliver the children of Israel from their oppressors, the Midianites. When Gideon first initiated his war campaign, his forces totaled thirty-two thousand men. However, God knew that that with so many soldiers, they might be tempted to take the credit to themselves, if the battle were to be won. So, after conducting a series of tests, Gideon was left with only a band of three hundred men against a Midianite army which numbered in the many thousands. In fact, the Bible describes the armies of the Midianites, the Amalekites and their allies as being a very great multitude which numbered like grasshoppers or the sand by the sea. Consider these verses:

"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the

people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude."

Judges 7:2-12, KJV

Naturally, it was humanly impossible for Gideon and his small band of three hundred dedicated soldiers to defeat so great an army as this. For any secular army officer, it would seem suicidal to even attempt such a mad strategy. However, Gideon was not a regular man. As previous verses reveal, he had been specifically chosen by God to undertake this great task. In fact, the Lord had to convince Gideon two times that it was His Will that he do this for Israel. Furthermore, Gideon's soldiers were men of faith who trusted in the Lord, and not in their human abilities or arm of flesh. In short, Gideon's small army of soldiers had something which the armies of the Midianites did not have. That is the fact that the Lord was on their side. As a result, we are told that they eventually won the war, despite the odds being so great against them. Hundreds of years later, the Lord would say the following to Zerubbabel:

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

Zechariah 4:6, KJV

So the key to victory -- any victory -- whether in battle or in our personal walk of faith, is the Lord's Spirit, and not trusting in the arm of flesh; that is, not trusting in our own selves, our own abilities, and what we think we can do. In fact, it becomes evident that ever since the Lord first liberated the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, this was an important lesson that He was trying to teach them. We find this very same important message revealed in the following verses where Moses reminds the descendants of Israel that the reason why the Lord chose them in the first place, was not because they were great in number, but rather because they were actually the fewest of all people:

"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the

hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."
Deuteronomy 7:7-8, KJV

So, because they were the fewest of people -- you may recall that Jacob first went down into Egypt with seventy members of his household -- God was able to make them great in His time, and in His way. It was when they forgot this important lesson that the Israelites repeatedly ran into trouble with the Lord.

With this background information, we can now understand why the Lord's anger was kindled against King David. He had his thirty-seven mighty men who performed heroic acts for their king. Israel was populated by about one million souls. The Philistine giant Goliath and his giant brothers were dead. He had made a name for himself and was both known and feared by his enemies. He was rich, powerful, popular and had his wives and concubines. In fact, David was so popular with the women of Israel, that they even sang songs in which they boasted of his victories, which were greater than those of his boss, old King Saul. In short, things were looking rather well for King David. He was on top of the world, and that is when his pride and vanity became his downfall. Consider the following verses:

"And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward."
1 Samuel 18:5-9, KJV

"And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?"
1 Samuel 21:10-11, KJV

"Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day? And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?"

1 Samuel 29:3-5, KJV

So in his foolish pride, David wanted to conduct a census in order to determine exactly how big and how powerful Israel really was. He was gloating in the arm of flesh. He was also beginning to forget that it was the Lord who had really given him his greatness and everything that he possessed. In other words, motivated by his vanity, David wanted to take a little bit of the credit to himself. He wanted to savor the moment, when in reality, all glory, and all credit, is supposed to be reserved for the Lord alone. That was David's major mistake. As you will see in a moment, his pride cost him dearly.

Returning to the question which began this series, why are we told in one verse that the Lord was angered with Israel and moved David against them -- by conducting the census against the advice of Joab and his other counselors -- while in the second verse we are told that Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to perform the census? Who really motivated David to conduct the census? What is God, or was it actually Satan? If you have been following this series closely, then you will probably realize that despite outward appearances, there is absolutely no contradiction in these two verses whatsoever.

If we read a sufficient amount of the Bible, we discover that similar to any secular government, God has established a particular chain of command in His Kingdom. He maintains order throughout His Heavenly Government. In fact, consider the following prophecy regarding Jesus that is found in the Book of Isaiah, which briefly describes Jesus' position in this Celestial Government:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Isaiah 9:6-7, KJV

Another very interesting glimpse of the structure of God's Heavenly Government can be found in the Book of Revelation, as we can determine by the following verses which open the fourth chapter:

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven

Lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Revelation 4:1-8, KJV

Within His Holy Government, God has different positions and levels of authority and responsibility. God the Father sits on His Throne, while Jesus sits to the right of Him on His own Throne. Jesus most certainly does not occupy His Father's Throne, as some Christian writers have erroneously supposed. To do so would in affect be to usurp the Divine Authority of His Father. That Jesus actually sits to the right of Him is made quite evident by verses such as the following:

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Romans 8:34, KJV

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,"

Ephesians 1:20, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Colossians 3:1, KJV

"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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high . . . But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

Hebrews 1:3, 13, KJV

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"

Hebrews 8:1, KJV

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;"

Hebrews 10:12, KJV

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

1 Peter 3:22, KJV

In addition to our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus who each sit on their own Thrones, there are likewise the Four Beasts, as well as the Twenty-Four Elders who are seated on their own Thrones around God's Throne. Furthermore, there are the Seven Spirits who burn like very bright lamps, who I suspect may be synonymous with the Seven Archangels. Below them in rank are an unspecified number of other Angels. Each Angel and Spirit -- or Ministering Spirit -- fulfills the functions to which they have been assigned by their superiors. As you may know, the word "angel" -- derived from the Hebrew word "malak" and the Greek word "aggelos" -- means "messenger". While certain Angels serve as messengers to humanity, other Angels -- such as Michael, for example -- are great warriors. This becomes evident by certain verses that are found in the Books of the Old Testament -- such as in the Book of Daniel -- as well as by the fierce battle between Michael the Archangel and Satan that is described in chapter twelve of the Book of Revelation, as we see by these verses:

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Revelation 12:3-12, KJV

If you are interested in learning more about the nature of Angels, please consider reading such articles as "Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels", "The Judgement of Angels, Demons and Men", "The Book of Enoch: Truth or Heresy?", "Who Is Hindering the Antichrist?" and "Nephilim: The Giants of Genesis". The phrase "ministering spirits" is used in the following verses which are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire . . . But to which of the

angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Hebrews 1:7, 13-14, KJV

What we see in some cases is that God the Father will give an order to Jesus, who will then carry out that mandate. In other words, God is the real Director and Supervisor of the show. One excellent example of this is the Creation account itself. While many people who are not very knowledgeable of the Bible erroneously assume that God the Father created the Universe, there is plenty of Scriptural evidence to indicate that this is not an accurate statement. My understanding is that God the Father gave the Creation order to His Son, and then Jesus carried it out. At the very least, Jesus created all things under the direct supervision of His Father.

Consider the following verses. Carefully notice that while we are informed that all things are of God and proceed from God -- meaning God the Father -- at the same time, we also find phrases concerning Jesus Christ which say "by whom are all things, and we by him" and "who created all things by Jesus Christ":

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

John 1:1-3, 14, KJV

"And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:"

Acts 14:15, KJV

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands . . . For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Acts 17:24, 28, KJV

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Romans 11:36, KJV

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

1 Corinthians 8:6, KJV

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:"

Ephesians 3:9, KJV

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by 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 might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:16-18, KJV

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by 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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

Hebrews 1:1-3, KJV

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Hebrews 2:10, KJV

"For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God."

Hebrews 3:4, KJV

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

Hebrews 11:3, KJV

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:"

2 Peter 3:5, KJV

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Revelation 4:11, KJV

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH : PART 3

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Jesus Is Under The Authority Of His Father, God The Father

Is Greater Than Jesus Christ, Chain Of Command In Book Of Revelation, God The Father's Hierarchical Command Structure, Satan Serves As God's Prosecuting Attorney And Executor Of His Divine Will, Devil Is God Of This World, Satan: A Son Of God In Courts Of Heaven, Satan Challenges God To Remove His Hand Of Blessing From Job's Life, Accuser Of Our Brethren, Father Of Lies, Job's Afflictions And Stand Of Faith, No Man Hates His Own Flesh, Job Repents Of His Self-Righteousness And Pride, God Blesses Job Twice As Much As Before, Satan Fulfilled God's Will By Tempting King David To Conduct The Census, 70,000 Men Die As A Result Of David's Disobedience, Theory Regarding The Timing Of Psalm Twenty, Jesus Tempted By The Devil In The Wilderness, Jesus Was Made The Perfect Sacrifice Through His Human Temptations And Sufferings, All Of The Apostles Experienced God's Refining Process, Peter Is Sifted By Satan And Denies The Lord, Apostle Paul Buffeted By A Messenger Of Satan, Guardian Angels And Pesky Demons, Two Voices: God's Conviction And The Devil's Condemnation, How To Respond To Satan's Taunts, Fight The Good Fight Of Faith, Don't Let Satan Keep You Down, Accomplish God's Will For Your Life, Satan is God's Watch Dog, Closing Remarks

As I point out in articles such as "So You Really Think You Are So Humble?", there are a number of Scriptures in the New Testament which indicate that Jesus was under the Authority of His Father, and that He in fact took His orders from His Father. Stated another way, God the Father is greater than Jesus Christ. The Lord Himself informs us in the Gospel of John that without His Father's Permission and Anointing, He can do nothing, as we see here:

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

John 14:28, KJV

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel . . . I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

John 5:19-20, 30, KJV

"My Father is greater than I." There is really no other way to interpret those words, is there? If one person is greater than another, then obviously, they cannot be exactly equal in status, or in their level of authority, can they? Taking into consideration verses such as these -- and there are more -- it is easy to understand how Jesus could create all things in the beginning, under the direct Supervision of His Father, precisely as the Apostle Paul wrote. Another example of the Heavenly chain of command can be found in the opening verse of the Book of Revelation, as we see here:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to

shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"

Revelation 1:1, KJV

Here we see that God the Father gave the Revelation to His Son. Jesus then passed it to one of the Angels. The Angel then delivered the Revelation to the Apostle John. In turn, John wrote it down for the benefit of the Christian Churches which existed at that time, and for our own benefit as well. This is a very clear chain of command in the Heavenly Realm, as we can see by this simple graphic:

God the Father => Jesus => Angel => John => Churches

At this point, you may be wondering how this relates to our original question, and the census which was taken by David the king. Actually, it is all very related; because what we have demonstrated here is a hierarchical command structure. What we must also realize is that even the rebellious Angels are subject to God's Will, including Satan himself. This is where we can begin to understand exactly what is happening between the Lord, Satan and King David in these two verses from the Old Testament. From a human legal perspective, we can say that Satan serves as God's prosecuting attorney. He also serves as the executor of God's Divine Chastisements. Furthermore, as the Apostle Paul also reveals in this verse, the Devil is the god of this current world:

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

While some people may not be aware of this fact, depending upon how we choose to interpret the following verses, it appears that Satan either was -- or may still be -- allowed to enter into the Courts of Heaven. In fact, he is called a son of God, even though he is indeed a rebellious son of God. We find the following verses repeated several times in the Book of Job:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

Job 1:6-8, KJV

Here we see Satan communing with the other Angelic Beings before the Throne of God. If Satan wasn't still viewed as a son of God at the time that this event occurred, would he even be permitted to appear before the Throne of Almighty God? I imagine that what is happening in these verses is similar to how knights would present themselves before their king in the days of chivalry. At any rate, the Lord does not simply ignore Satan. Rather, He engages in conversation with him, and the topic of the Patriarch Job's loyalty enters the

discussion. It is at this moment that Satan challenges the Lord with the following words:

"Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD."
Job 1:9-12, KJV

As you can see, Satan is basically making the accusation that the only reason why Job is so loyal and obedient, is because God has blessed him materially. As we discovered in part two, in the Book of Revelation, that old, lying serpent is called "the accuser of our brethren". Furthermore, in the Gospel of John, Jesus outright calls him the Father of Lies, as we see by this verse:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."
John 8:44, KJV

Having made his accusation against Job, Satan then dares the Lord to remove His blessings from Job's life. Surely Job is such an opportunist, that the minute tragedy befalls him, he will curse God to His face; at least so the Devil foolishly believes. Notice what happens next. God does not personally undertake this action against Job. Rather, He gives Satan permission and the authority to touch Job's possessions and wealth. However, as you may know if you are familiar with the Book of Job, despite everything that befalls him, loyal Job does not budge in his faithfulness to the Lord. Tragedy -- while it certainly brings down Job and causes him a lot of grief -- does not make him abandon his faith in God.

For his part, due to his own pride, the Devil is not about to admit defeat so easily in the Heavenly Courtroom. This is a very tough case, but the prosecuting attorney still has other tricks up his serpentine sleeve. It is at this point that the Devil determines that more drastic measures are required if he is to really defeat Job. Thus, as we see by the following verses, Satan requests a second audience with the Lord, where he is granted permission to physically afflict poor Job's flesh:

"And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."
Job 2:4-7, KJV

As you can see, this time when Satan challenges the Lord, he

claims that a man will do anything to save his own life. Of course, he is in fact right. In many cases, some people will save their own skin, before they will think about trying to save someone else. As the Apostle Paul likewise wrote in his Epistle to the Ephesians:

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:"
Ephesians 5:29, KJV

So, Satan basically tells the Lord, "Alright, I went easy on Job. Just let me actually discomfort his flesh, and watch how fast he turns on You and curses You to Your face." As we saw during the previous audience, once again God does not afflict Job directly. Rather, He grants Satan permission to torment Job's flesh. However, there is one important caveat: He must not actually kill Job.

The rest of the Book of Job details the conversations which occurred between Job and the Lord, as well as with his wife -- who mocks him and tells him to just curse God and die -- and with his three friends -- Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite -- who also challenge Job's integrity. In the end, Job recognizes his pride and self-righteous attitude and repents of his sins. As a result, God blesses him twice as much as before, as is revealed by the following verses:

"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days."
Job 42:10-17, KJV

The key lesson from this story which applies to our current discussion regarding King David's sin, is that God did not intervene directly in Job's life. Rather, as He has done on many occasions down through time, He used Satan both as His prosecutor and executor of His Divine Will. Although he is a rebellious Angel, nevertheless, Satan is still bound by the command structure, laws and restrictions of God's Celestial Government. This is quite evident from the story of Job. As James writes in his Epistle:

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
James 2:19, KJV

Thus, it is my belief that when the verse says that the Lord moved against David to conduct a census, it may really mean that God gave Satan permission to influence David's thoughts and heart. It is my view that this is why we are told in the second verse that Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to conduct the census. In other words, the first verse informs us that it was the Lord who was moving against King David; and the second verse explains to us exactly how God moved against the king, just as He had done when He gave the Devil permission to afflict Job. While this is just a theory, it would seem to be in agreement with God's modus operandi, or method of operation.

To reiterate, Satan was operating under the authority of the Lord as the executor of His Divine Will. Because of David's pride, vanity, self-confidence and haughtiness, God used the Devil to chastise him and knock him down a few notches, and to remind the king in a very clear way that God alone was the true source of his power and victory over his enemies. Sadly, as the following verses reveal, this turned out to be a very expensive lesson for King David to learn. As a result of the king's disobedience in instructing Joab to conduct the census -- even though Joab and the other army captains were against the idea of conducting the census -- 70,000 men were slain:

"And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men."
2 Samuel 24:9-15, KJV

While there is no clear indication regarding when it was actually written, I have wondered if Psalm Twenty may have been composed by David sometime after the previous tragedy. In part one of this series, I shared verse seven from this Psalm with you. Here it is again for your consideration:

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."
Psalms 20:7, KJV

However, if we go back one verse, we are given a suggestion that David may have said this in his song because something occurred which influenced his thoughts. Notice in particular that the king writes "Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed". Is it possible that King David now realized this

because he had just lost 70,000 of his best fighting men to a terrible plague?:

"Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."
Psalms 20:6-7, KJV

We find other examples in the Scriptures where God likewise used Satan in this very same fashion; that is, to both test, strengthen and even purge His children. Primary among these is Jesus' own earthly Ministry. As you will no doubt recall, God allowed Satan to test Jesus during His forty days in the wilderness, as we see by the following verses:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."
Matthew 4:1-11, KJV

Please notice that we are specifically told that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil". Clearly then, this was a part of God's plan for His Son. God the Father tested Jesus' mettle. As I explain in a number of other articles, in order to make the Perfect Sacrifice, Jesus had to be tempted in like manner as we are; and He had to resist that temptation. He had to prove His love and loyalty to the Father. Thus we read the following in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."
Hebrews 2:16-18, KJV

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which

cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:14-15, KJV

All of the Apostles likewise experienced the same refining process. Let us not forget that as per Jesus' own words, all of them abandoned the Lord on the night of His betrayal by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. Furthermore, we are told that they likewise hid themselves in a cowardly fashion in a sealed room, as a result of their fear of the Jewish elders. Consider the following verses:

"Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples . . . Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." Matthew 26:31-35, 56b, KJV

"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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you . . . And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." John 20:19, 26, KJV

As I explain in the article entitled "Peter: Faith Tried in the Fire", being as he was to become one of the key pillars in the Early Church, the Lord warned the Apostle Peter that the Devil was out to get him, and was trying to sift him like wheat. In fact, Jesus outright told Peter that he would soon fall, as we see by the following verses:

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." Luke 22:31-34, KJV

As I explain in such series as "Why Doesn't God Heal Me?", even the Apostle Paul informs us that the Lord permitted a messenger of Satan to constantly harass him and to keep him in a humble state before the Lord. Consider these verses:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is

made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
2 Corinthians 12:7-10, KJV

While some people may scoff at the notion of Guardian Angels and little demons on our shoulders, as we can see, there is indeed Scriptural proof to validate such spiritual realities. We all have our Angel, as well as our demon. The still, small voice which encourages us and inspires us to do what is right is the Lord's Spirit; while the harsh voice that constantly criticizes us, condemns us and puts us down, is the voice of Satan; or at least one of his many minions. God sometimes uses His Spirit to point out our errors in order to convict our hearts, but it is for the purpose of helping us to make improvements in our lives. It is not to condemn us.

In contrast, Satan will only paint a very negative picture. He will tell us that we are hopeless, that we are just dirty rotten sinners, and that we are useless to the Lord's Work. If this happens to you, don't you believe it for one minute! Please know that the Lord loves you very much. Furthermore, He wants to use you for His service if you will allow Him to. When that negative voice speaks to your heart, just agree and shout, "Yes, you are absolutely right! I am a terrible mess!" Respond to Satan's wicked taunts by singing "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong, we are weak but He is strong!" Remember this verse as well:

". . . The Lord rebuke thee!"
Jude 9, KJV

Instead of wallowing in the mire of our own sins, we need to humbly confess our dismal state, and claim the Lord's Mercy on our lives. We need to stand up and be fighters for Jesus. Being as he was quite the fighter himself, the Apostle Paul had a number of things to say regarding being fighters for the Lord. Consider the following verses:

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
1 Timothy 6:12, KJV

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
2 Timothy 2:3-4, KJV

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
Ephesians 6:10-12, KJV

Satan does his best to keep us down, because he knows that once we get on our feet and start fighting with the Sword of the Spirit -- that is, the Word of God -- he is in trouble. If there is one thing that he does not want us doing, it is sharing our faith with others and winning new souls for the glory of God's Kingdom. Of course, not everyone is a great soul-winner. Perhaps your particular ministry and calling is something else. Whatever it happens to be, Satan will try to keep you so bogged down in your sins, that you will never accomplish anything for the Lord. Is that what you want?

In conclusion, as we have seen, while Satan has indeed turned against the Lord, nevertheless, God still has him on a leash. Furthermore, God uses that old snake as a sort of prosecutor and executor of His Divine Will. He allows him to nip at our heels and keep us in line. As we have also learned through the example of King David, if we disobey God or displease Him in some way, we may temporarily fall outside of the aura of His Divine Protection, in which case Satan and his demons may be permitted to test and tempt us, and perhaps even cause us bodily harm -- as in the case of the Patriarch Job -- until we realize our error, repent, and call out to the Lord for His forgiveness and help. I discuss this same topic more at length in such articles as "Beholding the Evil and the Good".

In addition to the aforementioned lessons, I hope that you have learned how to recognize alleged contradictions in God's Word, as well as how to properly study the Sacred Scriptures. To reiterate, rather than lean to our own understanding, we need to take the time to more thoroughly search God's Word, and compare Scripture with Scripture, so that we can arrive at the truth. We need to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and correctly interpret the Scriptures. Furthermore, as I mentioned in part one, we all need to ask the Lord for His Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment, so that we may be led by His Spirit in our understanding.

If we rely solely upon our own understanding and wisdom, we are bound to make mistakes as we read and study God's Word. We may even find imaginary contradictions, as many atheists and God haters tend to do. They have even published books regarding such matters. God will send us strong delusion if that is what we want. As I mentioned in part one, outside of a few numerical errors, most of these contradictions -- if not all of them -- only exist in their own stubborn hearts and minds.

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. I hope that you have found it informative, and I pray that it has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life. If you have enjoyed reading this series, please consider sharing its URL with your online friends. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would also appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which are related to the topics which were discussed in this series. All of them are also located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

Beholding the Evil and the Good
Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?
Free Will And Personal Choice
Job and the Land of Uz
Nephilim: The Giants of Genesis
Peter: Faith Tried in the Fire
Revelation's Babylon the Great
Satan: His Origin, Purpose and Future
Sex, a Bowl of Soup and the Nature of Angels
So You Really Think You Are So Humble?
Study, Work and Don't Be Ashamed
The Battle is Not Yours Alone!
The Book of Enoch: Truth or Heresy?
The Children Of God And Politics
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Judgement of Angels, Demons and Men
The Lord Will Lift You Up!
The Only Credentials You Need!
The Wisdom of God Versus the Philosophy of Men
Why Doesn't God Heal Me?

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