

## **WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR ONE**

### **We Reap What Adam Sowed – The Curse/Chapter Two: The Devil’s Position**

Most of us are familiar with stories of the devil offering an individual fame and fortune in exchange for his soul. Many of us would consider these to be fanciful myths because we either don’t believe in the reality of the devil, or doubt that he possesses such authority. Yet the fact of his existence and the power of his influence are confirmed by the words of Christ Himself. For example, in Luke 11:18, Jesus refers to Satan by name and acknowledges his possession of a kingdom. The devil is real and his authority over mankind is extensive, even though it falls short of having the “final say” in determining the eternal destiny of an individual soul. As real and powerful as the devil may be, he is a created being and not divine.

As a direct creation of God, he initially had no sin, but lost that perfect condition in his rebellion against God, which would have taken place **after** the end of the creation week, when God declared everything to be “very good” (Isaiah 14:12-15; Genesis 1:31; Exodus 20:11). In his fallen condition, he was allowed by God to tempt Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent, for the good and positive purpose of testing their submission and obedience (Genesis 3:1-7). In light of the terrible consequences of their disobedience, it is likely that an equally positive result would have taken place had they passed the test. In other words, they would have been confirmed in their sinless condition, maintaining their God-given authority to exercise dominion over planet earth (Genesis 1:26-28). Instead, they fail the test, fall into sin, and lose their right to rule and reign as God originally intended. In the aftermath of their failure, this privilege has been transferred to the evil one. We have been under Satan’s malicious influence ever since.

As a result, the devil is ascribed titles of authority such as “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31), “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). When tempting Christ, Satan offers Him all the kingdoms of the world, confirmed by the devil’s assertion in Luke 4:6b – “. . . for it has been handed over to me and I give it to whomever I wish.” This is the **devil’s position** in relation to our human condition. The exercise of his dominion authority over us has been anything but benevolent, with his malice toward humanity expressed in two ways. First, the devil does everything he can to keep every individual trapped in their alienation toward God, so that as many people as possible will ultimately share in his eternal punishment (Matthew 13:19; 25:41). In the meantime, his secondary goal consists of creating as much suffering as possible for our fallen human race. Indirectly, this takes place whenever he successfully tempts people to sin, who in turn suffer the negative consequences of their behavior. In addition, Scripture indicates that some human suffering can be the direct result of demonic affliction (Luke 13:11) and possession (Matthew 9:32).

Not all human suffering is directly related to demonic activity as the distinction in Mark 1:32 makes clear. But the Bible does confirm that Satan possesses a significant measure of authority over mankind; making him a key player in the outworking of the curse, and an important factor in any Scriptural explanation of suffering.

**Simply put, we are reaping the negative consequences of the devil’s malicious influence, as a result of the disobedience sowed by Adam in the Garden of Eden.**