

# Give The Devil His Due

## Chapter 3

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### The Word “Serpent”

“Serpent” is one of the words used in the Book of Revelation in conjunction with “Satan,” “the devil” and “the dragon.”

The first use of this word in the Old Testament is in Genesis 3:

*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shalt not eat of every tree of the garden?*

Genesis 3:1

“Nachash” is the Hebrew word translated “serpent.” Strong's Concordance defines it: “to hiss, i.e. whisper a (magic) spell.” It could also mean “snake or serpent, a prognosticator or enchanter.” We have a choice here so we must check the context to decide what the serpent is.

The serpent continued to talk with Eve and then God says:

*And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Genesis 3:13-15

After reading these verses, here are some conclusions which can be drawn about the serpent:

1. This serpent is not, necessarily, a beast of the field. The Bible says it was more subtle than one — it didn't say the serpent was the most subtle beast.
2. The serpent could communicate with Eve.
3. Eve blamed it for her act.
4. God spoke to the serpent.
5. The serpent is not necessarily-immortal because, in verse 14, there is an inference of a life with an end, where God said: “dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”
6. No supernatural act was performed by this serpent; unless, we consider that every time a human being makes a mistake or commits a sin, or turns against God, that it is a supernatural act caused by some supernatural being.

The incident of Genesis 3 is recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

1 Corinthians 11:3

Paul feared they might be beguiled in the same way that it happened to Eve. Who did Paul fear would do the beguiling?

*For if he that cometh preacheth*

*another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*

**2 Corinthians 11:4**

Paul is comparing the preaching of a false gospel to the serpent beguiling Eve. He was warning the Corinthians about someone coming to them preaching false doctrine. The comparison is accurate because here is what the serpent did to Eve:

*And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

**Genesis 3:2-5**

What did the serpent do? He preached another gospel! He distorted the true meaning of God's Word. That is what Paul was afraid would be done. He likened someone coming and preaching another gospel (telling you God said something that God did not say) to what happened with Eve and the serpent in the garden. Paul knew that men would do that. Why, then, do we need a supernatural agent in the garden of Eden to do what Paul said men could do by themselves? The answer is that we don't need one. Every act or characteristic of the serpent in the garden of Eden could be performed by a man or any creature speaking wrongly of God's Word. That is all that we can really attribute to him.

The next time the word "serpent" or "nachash" is used in the Old Testament is in Genesis 49:

*And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.*

**Genesis 49:1-2**

Then Jacob links each one of his sons (or tribes) with a prophecy about the last days:

*Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.*

**Genesis 49:16-17**

The word "serpent," in verse 17, is from the word "nachash" and the word "adder" comes from "aderath," which is a Hebrew word meaning a snake. It is implied that Dan could, in some manner, fulfill whatever a serpent does. We had better be a little careful what we say the serpent is because, apparently, Dan was a serpent or "nachash."

## **Moses And Serpents**

In Exodus 4, the word "serpent" (nachash) is used in relation to Moses' rod:

*And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said*

*unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:*

**Exodus 4:1-4**

The word “serpent” is used again in Exodus 7:

*And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you; then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.*

**Exodus 7:8-9**

In this case, the word is a different Hebrew word: “tanniyn” (tan-neen), which means more specifically, a sea serpent or a land serpent. In other words, it was something like a snake or a dragon.

In Numbers 21, the word “nachash” is again used:

*And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents (nachash) from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent (nachash) of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

**Numbers 21:6-9**

“Nachash,” as used in these verses, is the same one used in Genesis 3 for “the serpent.” It is, also, used in several other verses such as 2 Kings 18, which again refers to Moses' brazen serpent:

*He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made...*

**2 Kings 18:4**

### **Other Verses Using “Nachash”**

Job 26:13 refers to the star constellation Hydra:

*By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*

**Job 26:13**

The following verses are speaking of a natural serpent or snake:

*Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;*

**Psalms 58:4**

*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.*

**Psalms 140:3**

Proverbs 23 contains another interesting passage about a “nachash”:

*Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contention? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent (nachash), and stingeth like*

*an adder (snake). Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again (the drunkard returns to his drink).*

**Proverbs 23:29-35**

In this case, what leads the man astray? What leads him to the strange woman? What gives him all of this woe and sorrow, contentions and babblings? Is it “the devil,” “the serpent,” “Old Nick?” No, it is wine which bites you like a serpent. God is just telling you what happens if you drink too much wine. No supernatural Devil of the churches.

These next verses are speaking of actual snakes:

*The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock. . .*

**Proverbs 30:19**

*He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it, and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.*

**Ecclesiastes 10:8**

*Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.*

**Ecclesiastes 10:11**

Isaiah 27:1 refers to a great serpent:

*In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent. . .*

**Isaiah 27:1**

## **Was There A Talking Snake In Genesis Three?**

According to the context, Jeremiah 46:22, Amos 5:19, Amos 9:3 and Micah 7:17 are speaking of natural serpents or snakes. This brings us to another remarkable conclusion: if you would study each and every one of the references in the Old Testament, in every case where “nachash” is translated “serpent” (with the possible exception of Genesis 3), it refers to actual snakes or serpents. The question is: could the serpent of Genesis 3, like all the other cases, be an actual serpent? Would God use “nachash” in every other case to refer to either a serpent or what a serpent did and then, in Genesis 3, use it to mean some supernatural archangel who had come down from heaven in order to seduce Eve? Some say it can't be an actual snake because serpents can't talk.

Numbers 22 contains another familiar story. Salaam has been hired by Salak to curse Israel:

*And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary (sawtawn) against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against*

*the wall: and he smote her again. And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.*

**Numbers 22:21-27**

Balaam is having a hard time. Apparently, he doesn't see the angel, but the donkey does.

*And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she (THE DONKEY) said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.*

**Numbers 22:28-29**

Can you imagine this man sitting on this donkey, talking back to it? He says, "If I had a sword I would kill you!"

*And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.*

**Numbers 22:30**

The donkey is sticking up for herself. She is explaining why she kept disobeying.

*Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.*

**Numbers 22 :31**

If a donkey can be given the power of speech by God, then there is equal argument for the serpent of Genesis 3 to have the same ability. This feat is, at least, as believable as a snake being some sort of a fallen angel.

As I studied these things out and began to put things together, I was a little bit shocked at what I found. In almost every instance when preachers use words from the Old Testament to preach of this great archangel, fallen angel, devil called Satan, these preachers mean something other than what the Bible actually says. In only two instances in the Bible could we, with any reasonable honesty, say it refers to a supernatural angel who has power over men — and it is not an adversary nor a snake.

In all of the Old Testament Scripture, "nachash" means a literal snake or a symbol of a real snake. To teach that the serpent of Genesis 3 is anything other than a literal snake, which has been given the power of speech by God, is really speculation or opinion.

We have given no "due" to the serpent, here and we can give no "due" to the devil. In fact, the Old Testament, as I mentioned earlier, the word "devil" (singular) is not even there. It is there only in the plural (devils).

## The Comet Kohoutek — An Analogy

I'd like to remind you of something that happened some years ago. This may have been God giving us an event that should have made us think, and it should make us think now. Some of you remember the comet Kohoutek. According to Howard Rand's article, Kohoutek came from the vicinity of the great snake con-

stellation, Hydra. If you recall, the astronomers, in scores of magazines and newspaper articles and on television, told us that Kohoutek would be the “comet of the century.” It was supposed to be something so brilliant that once it passed the sun and started on its return journey to the heavens, we would all be able to see it.

Ministers began to preach sermons about comet Kohoutek, calling it a sign in the heavens. I did a series on the radio about it, myself. Luckily, I waited until after it was over before doing the radio sermons on it. Perhaps God held me back.

Kohoutek was visible to the astronomers through their equipment as it went toward the sun. But, once it passed the sun instead of blazing out in many millions of miles of tail like they said it would, it disappeared.

Thousands of people on the West coast chartered an oceanliner to get away from the smog of Los Angeles so they could watch this blazing comet in the sky. They were going to have a party as they watched.

Remember that Kohoutek came from the constellation Hydra, as near as our astronomers could tell. What happened to it? When it got to the sun, which is symbolic of the Light of God's Word, it became a nothing. It disappeared. No one saw it again. The only people who saw Kohoutek as it returned to the heavens were astronomers with extremely-powerful tel-

escopes who could see it just before dawn and just before sunset if they happened to be in the right place. As far as I know, no naked human eye saw Kohoutek.

I wonder if the Devil of the churches is not some thing or some being which has been built up into a great and glorious symbol of light; — a “Lucifer,” who is worshipped by millions in the world. He is worshipped by many church people because of what the churches say he does, or can do. Perhaps when he gets to the Light of God's Word, or we shine the Light of God's Word on him, we'll discover that he is like the comet Kohoutek — he will disappear when the Light of God's Word comes.

Please withhold all of your consideration on the final solution to this problem because we have quite a bit more to study. Most people have come from churches which teach of a great “hell;” a place where the vast majority of mankind is taken by the millions and tortured for ever and for ever by the devil and his angels. By the study of God's Word, we have discovered that the “hell” of the churches, exists only in the minds of those who preach false doctrines. When you turn the Light of God's Word on “hell” it becomes what it is in the Bible, simply the grave or the place of the dead. Is it possible that when we turn the Light of God's Word on the king of that devilish kingdom, that king will disappear along with his kingdom?

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