

# Satan's Method of Deception

By Henry Mahan

**Bible Text:** Luke 4:5-7

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...that Satan is a liar. He is a liar and he is the father of liars. Our Lord said in John 8:44: "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 he is the father of it."

And then something else the Master said about him. In John chapter 12, verse 31 he called him, not only a liar and a murderer and a father of lies, but he called him "the prince of this world," the prince of this world's system. In John 12, verse 3: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." That's Satan he's talking about.

And then over in the book of Ephesians, chapter six, the apostle Paul talked about Satan and he calls him a ruler. He calls him a ruler of darkness. He calls him "spiritual wickedness in high places," spiritual wickedness. In Ephesians six, verse 11 and 12 let's look at this. "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 or blood and flesh, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness or wicked spirits in high places."

Awesome, isn't it? It makes us tremble when we get on this subject. The angel of God said "The LORD rebuke thee, Satan." And then he is called, in Ephesians two, back just a little bit, he's called "a spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." Ephesians chapter two, verse two: "Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

And then one other Scripture regarding this, 2 Corinthians four, verse four. He's not only called a liar and a murderer and the father of lies and he is not only called the prince of the world and the ruler of darkness and the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. He's called the "god of this world." In 2 Corinthians four, verse four: "In whom the god of this world... But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 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."

Satan is not only a liar and he is not only a murderer and he is not only the prince of this world, the ruler of darkness and the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience and the god of this world, but I believe the outstanding or chief attribute of Satan and the one he uses the most, the one with whom we have to deal, is deceit.

Satan is a religious fraud. He is a spirit and his work of deception is in that area; rulers of darkness, wicked spirits in high places. Satan's chief work is in the area of religion. If you only look for Satan in the underworld, he has you deceived. If you only look for Satan in the camp of the atheist or the den of iniquity, this is exactly what he would have you to believe. He is a spirit. And Satan's chief area of deception is in the spiritual area.

Now, let me show you some verses. In 2 Corinthians chapter two, Paul has a lot to say about this. In 2 Corinthians chapter two, verse 10 and 11, Paul says, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us."

Hear the apostle Paul who had seen the Lord, who said, "I am not whit behind the chief apostle and yet I'm nothing." Yet he is saying here: "This must be done lest Satan get an advantage of us for we are not ignorant of his devices. We're not ignorant of his deception, his subtlety, his craftiness, his wiles."

And then, if you will, turn to 2 Corinthians 11. Paul is talking about him again in 2 Corinthians 11. If this doesn't cause us to tremble...

You say, "Why are you so anxious about this particular message?"

I'm anxious because we're invading his territory. Now, you can stand off over there in the next county and talk about a fellow, but you come into his county, you're in trouble unless you've got some forces with you that are greater than his.

I know a lot of people speak lightly of Satan and they stand up and preach on "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." It's a good possibility they never have encountered him at all. Job encountered him. The apostle Peter encountered him. The apostle Paul encountered him. He said, "Satan hindered us."

And here he is talking about the Church at Corinth, 2 Corinthians 11:3: "I fear. I'm afraid," Paul says. "I'm afraid, 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." Corrupted by whom? By the same one that corrupted the mind of your mother Eve.

And if you look for him, if you are looking for him down there in the honky tonk you're looking in the wrong place. That is not his territory. If you are looking for him in the atheistic camp...Do you think Madelyn Murray O'Hair is his spokesman, you've got another think coming. She's speaking for herself.

His ministers are ministers of righteousness. They are angels of light. That's right. Read 2 Corinthians 11. Let's go back. Let's go on over to verse 13. Let's look at it. He talks here about "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." Our Lord said, "Try the spirits whether they are of God."

Read on. "And no marvel." That's no marvel, these deceitful workers, these false apostles, transforming themselves into ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's no marvel. "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of what?" Darkness, disease, drunkenness, death. No sir. Light. Light.

"Got a revelation from God. Want to listen to it? Had a vision last night. God spoke to me."

Who was it spoke to you?

The preacher said, "I sat right up in bed. I got a vision from the Lord. He showed me this."

Who showed it to you?

God speaks through his Word.

A good possibility if you get any kind of vision in this day, the vision that reaches your senses, like your ears or your eyes, it's not God at all. God speaks through his Word. If they add anything to this Word God said, "I'll add to them the plagues. If they take anything from this Word I'll take their names out of the book of life. If they speak not according to this Word there is no truth in them." The canon is complete.

God is not going to give you any special revelation. Our Lord said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets they won't hear though one rose from the dead."

People are having visions, religious visions. They are having dreams and religious dreams, but it's not God.

"Oh, but it...the dream was so sweet and so...it was light about me and the vision told me to do something good."

Sure. Satan's not going to tell you to do something bad. He's going to tell you to do something good. He's a deceptive, deceitful worker, an angel of light.

Now, look at it. Look at it carefully. "No marvel." These deceitful workers and these false apostles changing themselves into the apostles of Jesus Christ. What do they say at the judgment? "We preached in your name."

His false preachers don't preach in the name of the devil. They preach in the name of Christ.

“We cast out devils in your name.”

Christ said, “I never knew you.”

Then whose apostles were they? Whose preachers were they? He didn't know them.

Look at verse 15: “Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”

Whose righteousness? Your righteousness.

Satan's apostles don't preach God's righteousness in Christ. They preach your righteousness, your righteousness.

Let me show you one of the most interesting illustrations. I read it a moment ago. I hope you watched it carefully. Did it mean...when I read that Scripture where Satan said, “The kingdom, the power and the glory is mine,” did you note that? Did you? Have you ever heard those words in that order before?

Turn to Matthew chapter six, verse 13; Matthew 6:13. Now, listen to this. Matthew 6:13. Now, what I am saying is this: Satan moves in the area of religion. Satan is a ruler of the darkness, wicked spirits in high places. His apostles are false apostles, but they are ministers of righteousness and he, himself, is changed into an angel of light. He talks about God. He talked about God to Adam and Eve. He talks about peoples' eyes being opened, people understanding truth. He talks in that vein.

And here in Matthew chapter six, verse 13, our Lord...the disciples came and said, “Teach us to pray.”

And he said, “When you pray say, ‘Our Father in heaven...who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.’” And look at verse 13. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

And Christ, the authority who speaks for the Father the Word of God says, “Thine is the kingdom. Thine is the power. Thine is the glory forever, Amen.”

Look back at our text. Satan said...he showed him the kingdoms. He talked about the power and he talked about the glory and he said, “It's mine to give. It's mine to give.”

And that's the issue. That's the battle ground. Whose is the kingdom? Whose is the power? Whose is the glory? That's the issue. That's the battle ground.

Who, alone, can give the kingdom?

Satan's a liar. Old Dr. John Gill said, "Satan is a liar. The kingdom of nature is God's. The kingdom of providence is God's. The kingdom of grace belongs to God."

It's not Satan's. It never has been. It never will be. It's not his to give.

Here is...God's is the power, the power to kill or to make alive, the power to save or to destroy, the power to forgive sin or to preserve it. And the glory is his, the glory in all is his in all. And to whom the glory all is, is our God.

Satan is a liar. He lied to Adam and Eve. He'll lie to you.

This is the issue. Almighty God is sovereign, absolutely sovereign in the kingdom of nature, in the kingdom of providence, in the kingdom of grace or he is not sovereign at all.

Somebody says, "Well, we just differ in form. We differ in ceremony. We differ in some minor doctrines."

No, we don't. We differ on the main issue, the main issue. God almighty is sovereign, absolutely sovereign or he is not. Almighty God is king of this universe or he is not. He is king in every area or he is not. He has the power to give life. He has the power to destroy. He has the power to save. He has the power to damn or he doesn't.

Christ said, "Thine is the kingdom. Thine is the power. Thine is the glory."

Satan said, "It's mine. It's mine to give to whom I will."

Now, man is either absolutely...we face six stubborn statements. In fact, 28 some odd years ago, 23 or 4 or 5 years ago I heard a message on this subject: Six Stubborn Statements. It gripped my heart. I had to wrestle with it and deal with it. God's either absolutely sovereign or he is not. Man is either totally dead in sin and totally depraved and totally without hope and help and with out God or he is not. God almighty either did or he didn't elect a people to salvation. He either did or he didn't. There is no compromise. You can't get around it.

You can't say, "Well, election is like this. God voted for you and the devil voted against you and you cast the deciding vote."

The devil is not a registered voter in the kingdom of God. And this election was held before you were old enough to vote, Cecil. That's when it was held. So you didn't have anything to do with it and Satan didn't have anything to do with it. It's God's election.

Now, God either elected a people or he didn't. He's either...the kingdom is his and the power is his and the glory is his or it's not. It's ours. That's what Satan said. That's the issue. That's the conflict. He's a religious devil. He's a spirit. He's a subtle devil. He's a liar. He's a deceitful devil. And he even said to the Son of God, and he'll say it to you:

“The kingdom is mine to give. The glory is mine to give. The power is mine to give to whom I will. I will.”

That’s what got him in trouble. “I will.”

You read Isaiah chapter 14. You’ll find that was his whole problem: “I will be like God. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend into heaven. I will.” Five times he said it. “I will.”

The fourth statement is this: Christ either redeemed his people, all of them, or he didn’t redeem anybody; effectually redeemed them, eternally redeemed them in a way that God’s holiness and God’s mercy and God’s righteousness and God’s truth might be honored. He either redeemed them, he either saved my soul or he didn’t save my soul. He paid my debt or he didn’t pay my debt. He satisfied God’s justice or he didn’t satisfy God’s justice. He got the job done or he didn’t get it done, one or the other. No compromise there.

And the Holy Spirit has the power, the effectual power to bring sinners to a knowledge of Christ or he doesn’t. He’s either an effectual spirit or a trying spirit. He is either an invincible, conquering, irresistible spirit or he is a defeated spirit. Which is it? Make up your mind.

Stubborn thing, isn’t he? You get a hold of something you can’t turn loose of.

Barnard used to say, “You meet a truth in the middle of the road. You’ve got to do one of two things. Either receive it or run from it. Receive it or run from it.”

And the sixth statement is this: God’s people, every one of them, will persevere. Every one of them will be raised. Every one of them will be like Christ or none of them will.

If one sheep of Christ could fall away your soul and my soul that fall how many times a day...?

Charles Spurgeon said this: “You say, ‘That’s offensive.’ I know it is. But Christ said, ‘Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you it hated me before it even met you.’”

It’s despised. It’s hated bitterly. It is hated in this century. It was hated in the last century. It was hated in the days of Paul. It’s hated in the days of Christ.

His is the kingdom. His is the power. His is the glory. His is the authority.

Or is it vested in these depraved lumps of clay?

Charles Spurgeon said this. He was preaching to an assembly of preachers in April 1890. This was less than two years before he died, that great preacher, 57 years old when he said this. He died when he was 58. But he was speaking to an assembly of preachers one

Friday afternoon, April 1890, and this is what he said: "If anything is hated bitterly it is the out and out gospel of the grace of God, especially if that hateful word 'sovereignty' is mentioned with it: the sovereign grace of God. Dare to say...dare to say 'He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion,' and the furious critics will revile you without mercy.

"The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of God's sovereign grace, but he raves and rages at the mention of it. He'd rather here you blaspheme than preach election by the Father, atonement by the Son and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. They had rather you...they won't have near as much to say about it if you blaspheme, if you use God's name in vain. They won't have near as much to say about it. The modern religionist can stand beside a man at work and that man can use the name of God in vain and that religionist won't say one word. But you let that man on the other side of him say, 'God saves whom he will,' and that fellow will climb a wall.

"That's right. He'll climb a wall. He'd rather hear you use God's name in vain than to say, 'God's is the kingdom and the power and the glory.' God will save whom he will when he will. God will deal with whom he will when he will the way he will for his own glory. The modern religionist will not object to your blasphemy, but he objects to your doctrine of redeeming grace."

If you want to see a man worked up until the satanic is clearly uppermost, let him hear you preach a free grace sermon, what we were talking about, Ronnie, I mean, free grace. I don't mean a mixture of grace and works. I mean free grace. I don't mean 90% grace and 10% works. He can take that. Or 99% grace and 1% works. But a message of free, undiluted grace, all of grace, and you'll see some rage. A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men. But a gospel which needs a divine operation upon the heart and the mind to make a man willing to receive it into his soul is a distasteful gospel.

And then Spurgeon said, "My dear brethren, don't try to make the gospel of God's grace tasteful to carnal minds. Do not hide the offense of the cross lest you make it of none effect. The angles and the corners of the gospel are the strength of the gospel. When you tone it down you don't increase the strength of it, but you pronounce the death of it."

If you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead. If you take grace out of the gospel, the gospel is dead. It's not good news. If people do not like the doctrines of God's grace, give them a little more of it.

When its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military general will provide them with more of the same.

He said, "A great general going in before his king stumbled over his own sword and the king said, 'I see your sword is in your way.' And the warrior answered, 'Your majesty's enemies have often felt the same thing.'"

When our gospel offends our king's enemies it is no regret to us.

I don't want to be harsh. But this...we are in a struggle. We are in a struggle with a satanic power. We are in a struggle with a deceitful enemy. We are in a struggle with a powerful enemy. We are in a struggle with an enemy who has access to the minds of men, "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience."

And what he says can't be true if what Christ says is true. Christ said, "Thine is the kingdom. Thine is the power. Thine is the glory."

And Satan says, "It's in your hands. It's in my hands to give it to whomsoever I will."

Who is God?

Have you ever sat down? And I did this the other day in thinking about this message.

You know, turn to John 17:3. Who is God? Who is God? In John 17, verse three, our Lord said this: He said to the Pharisees: "You don't know me or my Father. You don't know God."

Now, these people used the name of God. They met together in the temple of God. They read the book of God. They used the name of God. They claimed to be the children of God. They prayed to God. And Christ said, "You don't know God. You don't know me or my Father. No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

Do I know God?

Is the God you worship the God of the Bible?

"I worship God, preacher."

I know you do. But is it...is he the God of the Bible? Is your God the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is your God the creator of this universe? Is your God the one in whom we live and move and have our being? Is your God the one who revealed himself in Christ?

Is that your God?

Listen to John 17:3: "This is life eternal. This is it. That they might know thee, the only true God." Not a god, some god, the God. There's just one, the only true God.

Know him and Jesus Christ.

This is what Paul was talking about when he said, "Oh, that I may know him, him, him, that I may know him and the power of his resurrected life."

David said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks like a thirsty deer in a famine, in a land of famine, in a dry and thirsty land. As that deer panteth and thirsteth for the water brooks, the cool flowing water, the only thing that can meet his need and quench his thirst, my soul thirsteth for the living God."

I don't want the Methodist God or the Baptist God or the Catholic God or the God of my Fathers. I want the true and living God. He is the only one who can meet my soul's needs. He is the only one that can provide my soul's need. He is the only one with whom I can walk and talk and fellowship. He is the only one who can save my soul.

I want to ask you three questions. I want you to think this over carefully, now. I want you to take it home with you. I want to ask you three questions. The first one is this: Now, I want you to turn to Romans nine, Romans nine. Now you think about this question. You listen carefully to it. I'll think about it, too. Our Lord said, "His...Thine is the kingdom, power and the glory."

Now, does God have a right, does he have a right to save whom he will?

Now everybody is arguing about the truth or the error of election or the truth or the error of this doctrine or the other doctrine, the truth or the error of particular redemption or universal atonement or the truth or error of invincible grace. But just now come down to this: Does God have the right to save whom he will?

Now, whether you are an opponent of election or whether you are an advocate of election: Does God have the right to save whom he will?

The God of the Bible said he did. In Romans nine, verse 20. Listen. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

He says, "I got the right to do with my own what I will 'cause I'm God."

His is the kingdom. His is the kingdom. The kingdom of nature, when God gets ready for it to rain, it will rain. When almighty God gets ready for it to snow, it will snow. He asked Job that. "Have you entered the treasures of the snow?" God teaches the bird to fly south in the winter. God teaches the bird to build its nest. God teaches the bird to give birth to its young, to take care of him, to push him out of the nest, to teach him to fly, to teach them to do the things they have to do. His is the kingdom, the kingdom of nature.

His is the kingdom of providence. One man is born blind; another man is born with

20/20 vision. “Even so, Father, it seemed good in thy sight.” One man is born to parents who are slaves. Another is born to parents who are kings and queens. One man is born in an era of depression, poverty; another is born in a time of prosperity. “Even so, Father, it seemed good in thy sight.”

Turn to 1 Samuel two. Come on now. Who is God? Does he have the right to do with his own what he will? Whose is this world? Who created it? Who sustained it? Who keeps it? 1 Samuel chapter two, Hannah prayed, verse six: “The LORD killeth, the LORD maketh alive. The Lord bringeth down to the grave. The Lord bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor. The Lord maketh rich. The Lord bringeth low. The Lord lifted up. The Lord raises the poor out of the dust, lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes to make them inherit the throne of glory.”

Who did it? God did it. “For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, and he hath set the world upon them.” He started this whole thing.

His is the kingdom.

Satan, you don’t have anything to say about the kingdom of nature or the kingdom of providence. And his is the kingdom of grace. His is the kingdom of grace.

Second question. Are you with me? Does God have the right to save whom he will? And, brethren, I answer with an enthusiastic, “Yes, praise the Lord.”

Secondly: Does the Lord have the power to save whom he will? Does he have the power to save whom he will?

Turn to John 19, John 19. Pilate entered into a discussion with our Lord on this subject: Who has the power? Who has the power?

Pilate said in John chapter 19, verse 10: “Then said Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”

Oh, little puny man with all of his boasted power, his boasted free will, his boasted ability, his boasted self-confidence. Little old, puny, “I got power.”

Listen to what our Lord Jesus answered. This ought to be sufficient for every one of us. “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”

His is the power.

That policeman down there on the street wearing that badge. I saw a policeman. We were in McDonalds having lunch the other day. Turn to Romans 13:1. A policeman came in. He wasn’t in uniform, but he had a badge on his belt, right there. He had a gun over here in his holster. He had on a pair of blue jeans. He looked to be about young

enough to be my son. You know, they say you are getting old when school teachers and policemen look young.

But that kid came in there with that badge on, you know, and that gun on his hip. And I looked at that badge and I thought, "Son, that badge on your belt don't mean a thing. It doesn't mean a thing to you and to a lot of people. That badge says something." Do you know what that badge says to me? That's authority. And that's authority that he received from God almighty.

You say, "Well, he's not a Christian."

I don't care. Now you read this. Look at Romans 13:1 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?"

It's God's power. That's right. Every husband here has power in his home. That's God's power. You school teachers have power in the classroom. That's delegated power. That's God's power.

"For thine is the kingdom and thine is the power." There is no power. The strength to raise that arm I got from God. That's right. I'd like to see you free-willers, I'd like to see one of you get up and walk down this aisle without God almighty. Give her a try. You've got that kind of courage? You say you have got a free will, you say you are the master of your fate, the captain of your soul? You say God's turned you over? Get up and walk down this aisle without God almighty. Would you give it a try?

His is the power.

Satan is a liar. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Satan has no power. All power is of God.

And then the third question. All right. Are you with me? Does God have the right to save whom he will? That's an issue. Don't let Satan deceive you.

That bunch of folks came to Christ one day and they said, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?"

Those Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection they said, "Now, here's a woman over here. You talk about the resurrection. She has been married six or seven times. Who is going to be her husband in the resurrection?"

And then another fellow came around. He said, "Which is the greatest commandment?"

You know, we've got a lot of questions answered. I hear preachers on the radio who say, "Write in and send me your question."

Well, boy, you're asking for a lot of baloney, then. They'll really ask you some questions. Not one of them will ever ask you how God saves sinners. They'll ask you every strange thing in the world. That's a satanic deception.

And before they left there our Lord—Matthew 22—he stopped them and said, "What think ye of Christ?" Who is Jesus Christ? Whose son is he? That's the issue. Who is Jesus Christ? Who is God? Does he have the right to save whom he will? Does he have the power to save whom he will?

And here is the last question: Will any man be saved, will any woman, without his prevenient grace? Will any person, will any person be saved, come to repentance and faith without God, first of all, performing a work of grace in their heart, an initial work of grace, a prevenient work of grace, a preparing work of grace, an enabling work of grace?

Turn to John six, John six, verse 44. Now, listen to this. John 6:44. Listen to it. Our Lord said in verse 43: "Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves." There is no use arguing about this. Let's not get into a murmuring contest.

Verse 44: "No man," whoever he might be. "No man can, has the ability, to come to me, no man can come to me," coming to Christ is to believe on him, to receive him, to trust him, savingly come. "No man can, is able, to come to me," whatever his ability, whatever his talent, whatever his intelligence, "No man, except my Father which hath sent me draw him, effectually draw him, savingly draw him, graciously draw him." No man. No man can impart divine life. Only God. The dead cannot raise themselves. Only God. Darkness cannot create light. Only God.

Man had a kingdom one time, but he lost it. God gave him dominion. Didn't he? That's what he said. "Adam, have dominion over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air." Man had some power one time but he lost it. Now "in the flesh dwelleth no good thing."

Man had some glory one time. Turn to 1 Peter one. We had some glory one time. It hasn't always been this way. We had some glory one time, but we lost it. 1 Peter 1:24: "Now all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

Brethren, we are in a conflict. We are in a battle. It is not an easy battle. But the battle is to decide who is God. Whose is the kingdom? Our Lord said, "All authority is given unto me. All authority in heaven and earth. Thou hast given me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life. All power thou has given me over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me."

Old brother Stephens down in Clarence Walker's school, 1954, I was down there preaching one time. Do you remember him? Old brother...you remember him. He came up to

me and he said...I was just a kid. I'm just a kid now, but I was just a little kid then. And he came up to me. I was about 28, 29. He came up to me and he said, "Brother, Mahan, what do you think are the three greatest miracles that God ever performed?"

I said, "I don't know, brother Stephens." I said, "What do you think are the three greatest?"

He said, "I think the three greatest miracles: Number one is incarnation, the Lord of glory, the king of man." He said, "I'm astounded. Isn't that something? The ancient of days became the infant of days. He came down here to this earth. The Lord of glory was pleased to clothe himself, to robe himself in the likeness of sinful flesh. He dwelt among us. Think about it.

"If you talk about an angel becoming a worm, the condescension is not one millionth as great as Christ becoming a man; two extremes, infinite holiness identified with infinite darkness."

I said, "What's the second?"

He said, "Regeneration. That's a miracle." And then he said, "I'm not talking about decision. I'm not talking about making a profession of faith. I'm talking about a dead sinner, by the power of God, living. I'm talking about death itself becoming life. I'm talking about being translated from the kingdom black outer darkness to the kingdom of God's dear son. God almighty coming down here and raising a dead, helpless, hopeless sinner and making him live spiritually, rectifying what happened in the fall, restoring our souls." He said, "That's a miracle. Nothing short of a miracle can do that."

Beings don't have divine life in their hearts that we fan with a little illustrative, logical, emotional sermon and get them to make a decision. "Won't you decide tonight? Hey, dead sinner, won't you decide to live tonight? Go out there to Rose Hill and see if anybody will decide to live tonight. Pull out a drawer in the mausoleum and see if the brother there will decide to live tonight. It's not his decision. It's God's decision.

His is the power to make Lazarus live. Brother, they took old Lazarus and they wrapped him in winding sheets and made him look better and they anointed his body with the precious spices, made him smell better and they rolled a stone over the opening of that old dungeon and prison of the dead. And they made the whole community a better place in which to live.

But only Christ could stand out there and say, "Lazarus, live."

You can take an old sinner and make him quit his drunkenness and quit his carousing and you can make him look better and you can take the filth off of him and make him smell better and you can incorporate him in your church and get him to doing good deeds and make the community a better place in which to live. But only God can give him life. Only God.

I said, “What’s the third greatest miracle?”

He said, “Glorification. Think on it. One of these days...” He was old then. He said, “They are going to bury my body. Look at it. Wrinkled, old, fleshly, corruptible, weak, I’m so weak. They are going to put it in the ground. And then one day my Lord is going to descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, with the trump of God and I’m coming out of that grave. And I’m going to see him and be just like him. Think of it. I’m going to be like Christ.”

The beautiful multicolored butterfly is going to fly to that old cocoon and be like Christ. What a miracle.

You don’t....