



Dear Mishpocha in Messiah,

A Word From God As We Enter 2011

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:6-8

Two spiritual powers are highlighted in the above verse: God and the devil. The proper name for the devil is actually a Hebrew word, *sa-TAHN*, טוֹשׁ which means adversary. While believers, us included, prefer to focus on God, who is All Good, and downplay the satan, or Satan, who is the arch-enemy of good, the Bible makes it very clear that we have no choice—We must deal with Satan. (We capitalize his name, not to give him importance, but because the Bible does.) Notice that in the above verses, we are told what to do with Satan, but he is not the primary focus. God first. God last. Satan sandwiched in the middle. Submit to God—Resist the devil—Draw near to God. The Lord is showing us a pattern for VICTORY in 2011.

We are deceived (by guess who?) if we believe that we are not in a spiritual battle. The battle is actually intensifying, and we must be on the alert! If there were no enemy, nor a spiritual war going on, there would be no need for the exhortation of Ephesians 6:11—*"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."*

Identifying God and Satan

God is since *"the beginning"* (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:1). He has no origin, no becoming. He alone is *"the first and the last"* (Is. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12), the Creator. He is *Ehyeh*, I Am. He is eternal (*El Olam*). He is the Sovereign of the universe, the one true God, the God of consuming holiness and faithfulness who revealed Himself to His servant Moses as follows: *"And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth' "* (Ex. 34:6). This same God identifies Himself as a "family God" and says: *"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love (ahavat olam), therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you"* (Jer. 31:3). Holy. Faithful. True. Merciful. Gracious. Longsuffering. Good. Loving. That's the God of the Bible, who also chose to call Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:6).

Satan, on the other hand, is a created being. Most scholars agree that the passages in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 look beyond the Kings of Tyre and Babyon and describe in detail the person of Satan: *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!...For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit"* (Is. 14:12-15).

Notice the preponderance of the words, *"I will,"* from the mouth of Satan. We must check ourselves in 2011! Will it be *"I will"* (SELF) or *"...not as I will, but as You will"* (Matt. 26:39). In Ezekiel chapter 28, Satan is described as a beautiful creature, covered with jewels, full of wisdom, the anointed cherub who covered: *"You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you"* (Ezekiel 28:15). What was the iniquity? PRIDE...actually the greatest of all

sins, since it keeps us from seeing the others. God resists the proud. It caused Satan to be cast out of heaven (Ezek. 28:16-17). It can cause us to fall as well (Prov. 16:18)!

The Brit Hadasha also identifies Satan as an angel of light, referring to false apostles and teachers (2 Cor. 11:4), the tempter (1 Thess. 3:5), a deceiver (2 Cor. 11:3), a hinderer (1Thess. 2:18), the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), and the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Yeshua said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning, a liar, and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).

Jewish View of Satan

In rabbinic literature, Satan is identified as the tempter, the accuser, the Angel of Death, and the arch-enemy of Israel. As such, there are times when he must be specifically dealt with, i.e. on Rosh Hashana, the traditional Jewish New Year. The Talmud states that the shofar is blown in order to confuse Satan, and this prevents him from bringing charges against Jews on the Day of Judgment. Since the shofar is blown every morning during the month of Elul, and 100 times on the day of Yom Teruah, it is reasoned that Satan will believe the Messiah has arrived and that Satan's influence and power over God have come to an end (from the **Jewish Book of Why**—Kolatch).

A personal Satan was later conceived of as an evil spirit, actually an evil impulse or inclination. Rabbinic psychology came to see every person as driven by both good and evil inclinations: *yetzer ha-tov*, the good inclination, and *yetzer ha-ra*, the evil inclination. In order to be a good person, one must control the *yetzer ha-ra* with the *yetzer ha-tov*, which desires to follow God's commands. In other words, man has the power to overcome the evil inclination.

Most Jewish people today would reject as somewhat foolish the idea that there is a real enemy of God, Satan, who is alive and active in the lives of people today. The ancient rabbis were closer to the truth: "...In thy light we shall see light.' What is this light that the congregation of Israel looks for? That's the light of the Messiah, as it is said, '*God saw the light and it was good.*' God looked at the Messiah and his deeds before the world was created, and He hid the primal light for His Messiah and for His generation under the throne of His glory. Then Satan said to God, 'Lord of the world, for who is this light which thou hast hidden under thy throne of glory?' God replied, 'For him who will put thee to shame.' Satan said, 'Show him to me.' God said, 'Come and see him.' When Satan saw him, he was appalled, and he fell on his face, and he said, 'Verily this is the Messiah who will cast me and all the princes of the nations of the world into hell' " (Pesikta Rabbathi).

God's Plan vs. Satan's Plan for you in 2011

While God has a plan for your life in 2011, be sure that the enemy has one as well. As you stay humble, submitting yourself to God, resisting Satan, and continually drawing near to the Lord, His plan will be the one that triumphs.

God's plan, from the beginning, is to BLESS (Gen. 1:28). He wants you to have abundant life NOW (Jn. 10:10). Satan's plan has always been to curse—to darken the minds of men (2 Cor. 4:4). He is a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

God's plan is to give us REST. Satan's is to keep us in a state of anxiety and unrest. God, *I Am*, can only be found in the present. The enemy tries to get us to live in the past or the future, especially the future. C.S. Lewis, in his excellent book, **The Screwtape Letters**, says the following: "Nearly all vices are rooted in the future. Gratitude looks toward the past and love to the present; fear, avarice, lust, and ambition look ahead." Lewis contends that Satan wants a "whole race perpetually in pursuit of the rainbow's end." God wants us to be content today (Heb. 13:5) and to be anxious for nothing (Phil. 4:6), to enter His rest (Heb. 4:1) and live one day at a time (Matt. 6:34).

God's plan is to give us HOPE. He is the God of hope (Romans 15:13) who says to us: "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give*

you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). Satan's plan is to tell you that things are hopeless, to malign the character of the God of hope! He seeks to lead people from disappointment to discouragement, and finally to despair. We must not let Satan use the weapon of hopelessness when our expectations of God or people are not met. Stand on Psalm 42:5.

God's plan is for us to find FULFILLMENT in walking out the works He has pre-ordained for us (Eph 2:10). When we do this, we have success, peace, and joy. Satan's job is to keep us busy with other things and pursuits. His plan is to steer us away from Kingdom business, as directed by the Holy Spirit, to works in the flesh, even seemingly good and noble causes. His number one strategy is to distract us from time alone with God and prayer, lest we discover what God really has called us to do.

God's plan is for us to be a HOLY PEOPLE, separated unto Him, doing His will from the heart (Eph 1:4). He wants the world to see something "different" and "special" in us, something worth pursuing. Satan's plan is to have us present a "mixed message," to be one person at home, and another in the congregation, or to compromise "just a little," just in this one area." "Anyway, God loves me and will forgive me." Concerning God's plan, Screwtape, in C.S. Lewis' book, writes: "He (God) really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself—creatures whose life, on its miniature scale, will be qualitatively like His own, not because He has absorbed them but because their wills freely conform to His. We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons."

God's plan is for us to KNOW HIM and LOVE HIM with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is eternal life (Jn. 17:3)! It begins here and now for those who receive Yeshua as Messiah and Lord. God longs to reveal Himself to each of us as a Covenant-keeper, the Lover of our soul, our Father, our Advocate, Friend, Shepherd, and soon coming King. Satan's plan is to discredit who God says He is, and to convince us that God may be all those things to other people, but not to us. Since we only love the Lord because He first loved us, we can not possibly passionately love Him if we don't believe He passionately loves us! Satan also tries to get believers to love God in "moderation," without becoming "fanatics."

Satan's "Wiles"

Neil recently preached a message on God's vs. Satan's plans for our lives at Temple Aron HaKodesh in which he gave specifics concerning Satan's plan from A-ZZ. This list included many of the enemy's tactics, or as the Bible calls them "wiles": *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (Eph. 6:10-11). We have to know our enemy in order to be victorious over him. The Apostle Paul gave credit to the believers of Corinth when he reminded them, *"...for we are not ignorant of his [Satan's] devices"* (2 Cor. 2:11). One of Satan's primary tactics is to convince the world that he really doesn't exist, that he is a humorous character in a red suit. People laugh and say, "The devil made me do it." Believing in the devil is equivalent to believing in Santa-Claus. Faith in a supernatural Satan is unpopular, and generally scoffed at in the 21st century.

Satan's success depends on secrecy and obscurity. He rules mankind practically unnoticed. Most people do not realize that Ahmadinejad, for example, is being manipulated by a strong, spiritual force, probably the Prince of Persia. This is the same ruling spirit that encouraged Haman in ancient Persia (now Iran) during the reign of Queen Esther, to try to exterminate the Jewish people.

The "I wills" of Satan, as exposed earlier, let us see that Satan is pre-occupied with himself. One of his major tactics is to get believers to live for themselves, rather than for God. Self-will, self-exaltation, and self-satisfaction are satanically, rather than God-inspired. God says, "Die to self," "Crucify self." But self often rules.

Satan is crafty and sly. His major area of attack is the MIND. The thought-life of the believer is the

battlefield in a spiritual war. Victory comes through a disciplined mind. We must make this a goal in 2011, realizing that we can't stop Satan from whispering to us, but we don't have to accept, dwell on, nor receive his lies. We can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Messiah (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Know your own weaknesses. Satan offers bait, appetizing suggestions which correspond to our weaknesses, and seeks to trap us through counterfeits, deceptions and disguises. His lies are often so cleverly presented that they seem like the righteous thing to do!

Fighting the Good Fight in 2011

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 Jn. 3:8) Yes, Yes, Yes. There is victory through the Messiah Yeshua, as we STAND IN HIM—REMAIN HUMBLE—SUBMIT TO GOD—RESIST THE DEVIL—DRAW NEAR TO GOD.

Yeshua set an example for us in defeating our enemy. He used the Word of God. We have His Word and His Name available to us in 2011. It is time to use them both!! It's time to say: "Satan in the Name of Yeshua, GO!" He will flee if we resist him in Yeshua's Name. He will not flee from us, but from our indwelling Savior. That's why the Bible says, "...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 Jn 4:4). This verse is our encouragement to fight, not an automatic defense against attacks!

God's Word, the "Sword of the Spirit," is the only offensive weapon listed in the armor of Ephesians 6. We must use it in countering satanic suggestions. Ready set, fire! "Satan, in the Name of the Lord Yeshua, GO!—For it is written..."

Satan's attack

WORRY
FEAR
COVET
KEEP IT
CRITICIZE

God's Word says...

"BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING..."
"MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU..."
"BE CONTENT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE..."
"GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU."
"THINK ON WHAT IS GOOD..."

This is not just scripture memory. We suggest memorizing verses which relate to your areas of weakness, so that the Holy Spirit can bring them to your remembrance when Satan attacks. Watch how quickly the enemy flees when God's Word is fired at him! "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Rom. 8:37)

Believing God for a VICTORIOUS 2011 for you and your loved ones.

Neil & Janice

*P.S. Order Neil's teaching (CD) recorded live at Temple Aron Hakodesh.
P.P.S. Marty Goetz's music will help you draw near to God!*

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