**Abducted by the Devil; Rescued by the Christ**

Based on [Genesis 3:8-15](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Ge3.8-15) and [Mark 3:20-35](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mk3.20-35)

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The dictionary defines enmity as "a feeling or condition of hostility; hatred; ill will; animosity; antagonism." In the third chapter of the bible, Adam and Eve make friends with the devil, and they are put at enmity with God.

You know the story. God says to Adam and Eve, "**Don’t eat the fruit, for you will surely die.**" Satan the serpent says, “**You will not surely die**.” And so you have the first temptation of mankind.

Satan doesn’t tell Eve to “Eat”. He doesn’t directly contradict the command of God. That would expose him as the enemy, "out him". He doesn’t contradict God’s *command*, instead he contradicts Gods *reasoning*, “**You will surely die.**” “**Naaah, you will not *die***,” he says to Eve…And he’s got her! And if he’s got her he’s got a way to get Adam, her husband. And so it was that the first "family" of mankind, Adam and Eve, made an alliance with the devil. They take Satan’s reasoning over the reasoning of God, because he’s clever. He knows how to bring people to his side, to divide them from God through trickery, and bribery, in a word, through temptation.

If a child abductor wants to lure a child away from his parents, he doesn’t just come out and say, “**Don’t listen to your parents**.” That would set off an alarm...kids know that is wrong. Instead he says things that would get the child to forget, or ignore, or "think past" his parents commands. “My mom said not to talk to strangers.” “**Oh, but I’m not a stranger**.” “My Dad said to stay here.” “**Oh yes, but if you come with me, I have something very special to show you, it will only take a minute. Surely your father would want you to see this**.” Next thing...abducted, kidnapped, taken from the safety of parents and under the authority of an enemy. And imagine that enemy raising the child as his own, teaching the child that his parents abandoned him...that the abductor, the very enemy, is their true parent. **The enemy has control over your child and worse, he's turned your own child against you.** If any of you have been through a child abduction, or know someone who has, I’m so sorry for recalling for you such a painful memory. **But the illustration is an important one, because that is *exactly* what the devil has done to each and every human being conceived and born into this world.** Only he didn't come in the form of a devil, that would "out him." He came in the form of a snake, and our first parents, God's first children, were deceived, abducted, and the family of the human race has been in his household ever since.

The Rite of Holy Baptism reads, “**The word of God also teaches that we are born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own.**” We are born in the world, the household of the devil who is the prince of this world. It's *not* that he's overpowered God or something like that. It's that he's turned God's own children against Him and sends them, sends us out into the world unclean to blaspheme and defile every good thing God has made. As Romans 1:25 says, “**They (We) exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever, Amen**.”

Eve listened to the creature, the serpent, Satan rather than her head. Adam listened to Eve, a creature, rather than to God. And the uncreated God was altogether ignored by them all. Adam and Eve turned away from God and that is no small thing. For as our Lord Jesus taught, "**Whoever is not with me is against me**" (Matthew 12:30). There are sides, God's side and the devil's and there is no in-between. If you are against God, you are for the devil by default. James 4:4 says, “**Friendship with the world is *enmity* with God**.” If you bring a stranger into your bed, you are against your spouse. If you are for the Roughriders you are against the Stampeders, for both can’t hold the cup when the season’s over. Both God and Satan cannot rule the world when the age is over, and so you have to choose. Beloved friends, God does not want to be your enemy, but it can be no other way if you are friends of the evil one.

If you are against God, you are for the devil that is the truth. But this truth goes both ways. You can rejoice to know that if you are against the devil, you are with God. **And so in our Genesis reading, God pronounces a curse to the devil.** And that curse is the first prophecy of the Christ, the Messiah, the One whom God would send to rescue the human race and pay our ransom price. He says to the devil, "**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.**"

Enmity, it sounds like a bad thing doesn't it? In a world where we above all want peace with everyone and everything, we so easily forget that **we are by nature at peace with the devil**, and that's a bad thing. But that’s how Satan wants it. He's like the old woman in the Hansel and Gretel tale, who lures the unsuspecting children into her candy house. The woman appeared polite and kind and caring, giving them all their hearts desire, candies, pies, and tarts. And the little children thought "**Certainly this old woman means us well, for she's giving us good things that make us happy.**" The truth was, though, that she was simply fattening them up for the slaughter. And the woman knew that the easiest way to fatten them up and keep them in her dangerous presence was to give them what they want, so they can eat, drink and be merry until it's too late to escape the fire of her oven. She did not want them to think she was there enemy, she wanted to be at peace with them until it was too late to run home to their Father, who truly loved them.

Dear Christian friends, it's easy to think that the devil wants to be at war with us. He doesn't. We are of his household by nature, and as the head of the household, he wants to keep his house in order. Our Gospel lesson says as much. Jesus had been casting out demons, and scribes were saying he was doing it by the power of the devil. And so he said to them something we all need to remember. "**How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.**" Satan is at war with God and he wants us on his side. Satan does not cast out demons, nor does he cast out sinners. He encourages us, seduces us for we are little children, and we are his weapon against his enemy, **the one true God**. Satan doesn't reject humankind…he trains it with temptation, equips it with rebellion. Satan wishes to remain our friend to be in alliance with him. Friends are easier to persuade than enemies, and so Satan, that silver-tongued devil persuades us to strap to our person the plastic explosives of murder and lies and greed, envy, dissention, immorality and he send us out to destroy everything that God has created good, and insodoing, destroy our neighbors and even ourselves. He knows our sin can’t destroy God; but it will destroy the children whom God loves and he counts that a victory.

The human race is conceived and born into Satan's household. **The world is a stronghold against God, a barrack and a bulwark that would keep the human race from the knowledge of the kindness and mercy and love that their heavenly Father has for each and every one of us.** Our Heavenly Father could…I mean, He has the power to just bomb the place with his wrath, napalm the devil's stronghold with judgment; declare “total war” on the world and its prince, but insodoing He would destroy His beloved, abducted and captive children.

But friends, God is not caught in a bind. The devil hasn’t outsmarted God, nor has he “forced God’s hand.” This captivity we were led into, Satan meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to bring about the salvation of many people. For a moment after Adam and Eve allied with Satan, God promised He would make Satan our enemy through the offspring of the woman. And Genesis says, that offspring, the Saviour, “the Christ,” “**He will bruise Satan’s head, and insodoing Satan will bruise his heel.”**

Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to put enmity between us and the devil. So he says in (Matthew 10:36), “**“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.”**

Sounds harsh, I know, but Jesus says he did not come to make peace with Satan’s household…He came to divide it, to cause dissention within it and bring it to an end. Jesus says, “**But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the Strong Man. Then indeed he may plunder his house**.” What does this mean?...Jesus came to bind Satan, “the strong man” and once that is accomplished plunder you and the whole human race from his house. And that’s a military effort, and that means we will not find our eternal peace and comfort in this world, but only in the world to come.

Brothers and Sisters, God keeps his promises. As Baptized Believers, we have renounced the devil, all his works and all his ways and we are at enmity with the devil. **But we have no strength of our own to overcome him. The world is still his household, and we are not powerful enough to bind him.** God knew this from the beginning, and so, in the fullness of time, he so loved the world that he sent his only Son to die on the cross. **There all of your sin, all of your rebellion, all of the things that would make you worthy of eternal death were placed on Jesus, the sacrificial lamb, who separated your sin from you as far as the east is from the west, disabled death, and made the curse of the law impotent to damn you.**

When Jesus put your sin to death on the cross, Satan was bound. He can send flaming arrows your way, but they cannot penetrate you. Because of the victory of Calvary, you are no longer deserving of death, for by faith you are worthy of eternal life and have peace with God. Satan can no longer convince you that your Heavenly Father is against you, has abandoned you, or means you harm. Oh sure, he can try, but he has no power to win the argument, because Christ has taken away our reproach, and proven the love of God for us by being lifted up on the cross. And now he sends his church into the world to plunder the world with the freeing Gospel of Christ. Satan is bound, because he has no argument against the true Gospel.

**“So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: "I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!”**

In the beginning, the devil abducted the human race, and turned God’s own children against him. But God had a plan to infiltrate the devil’s house and plunder back what he had taken. And in the fullness of time, Two-thousand years ago, Jesus bound the Strong Man, the devil, by dying on the cross. There on Calvary the Gospel that was prophesied was fulfilled. And that Gospel, that preached word of the Christ crucified is what God uses to go out into the world--the devils house--and plunder his goods…proclaiming liberty to the captives, offering forgiveness, life, and salvation through the preaching of the Gospel and the giving of the sacraments in the church that is his own body.

Satan can no longer bind the consciences of the church, because we are the body of Christ. And on Easter morning, the body of Christ was risen from the dead showing that sin, death and the devil do not have the last word. Christ is risen, and we shall arise, give God the glory, Hallelujah.