

Previously we presented a five-part study on some contrasts of the heart that are found recorded between various people in the Bible. Since that time, I have realized that there should be discussed with this the ultimate contrast of the heart: that between Christ and Satan. J.M. Boice, in his book Christ's Call to Discipleship declares this contrast to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, contrasts of life – the contrast between Satan's way, which is also the way of the world, and God's way, embodied in Jesus Christ.

The word Satan really means 'adversary,' or one who is continually trying to drag us down and rule over us. Satan wants to push us as far down beneath him as he can; he wants to maximize the moral and spiritual differences between us. Think about his actions with Job, as he worked so hard to cause Job to curse God and turn away from Him. He also attempted to get Christ to bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8). In both of these he was unsuccessful, but he has many successes throughout the world and throughout history. We know that "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) He is the prince of oppression.

Judas Iscariot was one of His conquests; Satan used him to try to bring Christ down by another path, not knowing that he could not have the victory. An analysis of Satan's actions is recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14:

*How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*

We compare this to the loving concern of Jesus Christ, who wants to lift us up instead of cast us down. We read in Philippians 2:5-8:

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!*

It is Jesus' objective to stoop down and lift us up, thereby minimizing the differences between us. Even though the differences are infinite, he treats us as though we are without sin because of His grace. We read in Psalms 18:35, "You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great." Similarly, in 1 Peter 5:6 we read, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

The contrast indeed is great! As Boice wrote, "Satan said, 'I will go up. I will become like God. I will push God from His place.' Jesus said, 'I will go down. I will become like man. I will die to save him.'" Let us follow the one who would esteem us as better than He is and love us so much that He would lay down His life for us!