

Creation, Satanification, Regeneration, Deification

Part 2: Satanification and Its Nullification

By Ron Kangas

God's eternal purpose is to have a corporate expression of Himself in Christ as the firstborn Son and the believers as the many sons regenerated by the Father to be the members of the Body of Christ, which consummates in the New Jerusalem. Creation is for regeneration, and regeneration begins the process of deification—the process of God's organic salvation (Rom. 5:10) in which God's chosen and redeemed people become, by virtue of their union with Christ in life, the same as God in life, in nature, in constitution, in appearance, and in expression but not in the Godhead or as an object of worship. The goal of deification is the eternal, corporate expression of the Triune God. The three crucial matters of creation, regeneration, and deification are all for God's expression.

The thesis of the first installment of this three-part series was that the creation of humankind in the image of God was for regeneration by the life of God to fulfill the purpose of God. Central to this understanding of the relationship between creation and regeneration is that human beings need to be regenerated not mainly because they are sinful but primarily because they are human. We need to be regenerated, born of God, because we do not have the life of God. For us to be created by God means that we were produced by God to have a human life; for us to be regenerated by God means that we are born of God to have the divine life. We were created to be re-created, born to be reborn. Even if humankind had not sinned, human beings would still need to be regenerated. As human beings who, by creation, have the human life, we need to be regenerated in order to have the divine life, the eternal, uncreated life of God. Creation is for regeneration, and regeneration fulfills God's purpose in creation.

God's eternal intention is opposed by God's enemy, Satan, who, in his craftiness, has devised a strategy to ruin humankind and to frustrate the fulfillment of God's purpose. Satan's objective is to cause humankind to become the

same as he is in his evil life and nature. The term that best describes this is *satanification*—the process through which the human beings who were created by God according to His kind for His glorious expression are injected with the life and nature of Satan to become Satan's kind for his perverse expression. Satan's counterplot, therefore, is to *satanify* humanity. The suffix *-ify* means “make,” “form into,” “invest with the attributes of,” “make similar to.” Thus, for Satan to satanify man means that he makes man the same as he is in life, nature, and constitution. By injecting himself into man and then investing man with his attributes, Satan has made humankind intrinsically one with him and the same as he is in life, nature, constitution, and expression. This is what we mean by satanification. To be sure, Satan continues to exist objectively outside of human beings. The point of emphasis here is that by infecting man with himself in his sinful life and nature, Satan has brought forth a horrible mutation as a result of which human beings have been constituted with the life and nature of Satan and have been invested with the attributes of Satan to become Satan.

But by the grace of God there is good news, and this good news—the gospel—is that through the incarnation and through the redeeming death of Christ, God in Christ has condemned sin and has destroyed the devil and his works, including his work of satanification. For the sake of His desire to have an expression through creation, regeneration, and deification, God has come to accomplish the total nullification of satanification, and it is the object of this article to consider both satanification and its nullification in some detail.

Sin and Satan

Although human beings have been satanified and now have Satan as sin within them, we should not say that sin and Satan are one and the same. To assert that Satan as

sin dwells in human flesh does not mean that he has no objective existence apart from the flesh of fallen human beings. Satan is a spiritual being with an actual, objective existence. According to Ezekiel 28, he was “the anointed cherub who covered the Ark” and was perfect in all his ways until unrighteousness was found in him (vv. 14-15). Verse 17 says, “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness.” Isaiah 14:12-15 presents an account of the “Daystar, son of the dawn,” the one who said, “I will exalt my throne,” and “I will make myself like the Most High.” Having fallen from his lofty estate, the one formerly called “the anointed cherub” and “Daystar” has become the devil, Satan, the evil one (1 John 5:19), whose purpose is to damage the work of God and to build up his own kingdom (Matt. 12:26). Since Satan has a definite objective existence as a personal being and as such will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10), we should not make the mistake of asserting an absolute or unqualified identification of sin and Satan or a limitation of Satan’s existence and operation to fallen humankind. Nevertheless, there is a subjective aspect to Satan’s operation. As the spirit operating in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2), the children of the devil, he manifests himself through sinful persons.

Satan’s disposition is to sin (1 John 3:8; John 8:44), and he has injected himself as sin into humankind, causing human beings to become a constitution of sin (Rom. 5:19). It would be erroneous to suppose that sin is nothing more than an attitude or acts of disobedience and disloyalty to God and His word. This limited understanding of the nature of sin emphasizes the objective aspect of the truth—sin as an attitude or action of disobedience—but it neglects the subjective aspect of the truth—sin as a power, law, and principle, with a nature and character of its own and which indwells everyone and which is the source of all sins. We sin because we are sinners, that is, those who are a constitution of sin. Adam became a sinner by committing a single act of sin; the descendants of Adam commit acts of sin because they are sinners by constitution.

At this point it may be helpful to consider the definition of sin presented in the New Testament: “Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). Lawlessness is the unbridled assertion of self-will and the utter disregard of any principle of law. To be lawless is to reject the principle of God’s ruling over us and instead to do our own will and to live a life of total independence from God. The essence of sin, therefore, is not merely disobedience or transgression; the essence of sin is lawlessness, the flagrant disregard of divine authority or restriction.

Another crucial verse regarding sin is Romans 3:23: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” In light of this verse, to sin is to miss the mark, or to come short, of

the glory of God. The glory of God is God’s expression, God Himself expressed. Human beings were created by God in His image to express Him for His glory. However, because of indwelling sin and the practice of sinning, fallen persons, instead of expressing God, express the sinful self. Anything we do or say that expresses the self is short of the glory of God and thus is sinful in the eyes of God.

It is significant that sin violates both aspects of God’s purpose in creating humankind—image and dominion (Gen. 1:26). Image is related to expression, and dominion, to authority for representation. God intended that human beings would be under His direct rule and thereby be able to represent Him with His authority. However, due to the intrusion of sin, human beings universally pursue a life of lawlessness. Moreover, although God intends that we express Him for His glory, because of sin we all are short of the glory of God, expressing the self instead of God. If we understand the nature and function of sin in light of God’s purpose in His creation of humankind, we will realize that sin violates and negates God’s purpose to be expressed through and represented by the human beings created by Him in His image.

The devil, Satan, is the source of sin (John 8:44), and, in fact, sin is the very nature of Satan. Although sin came into the world through man’s disobedience, sin did not originate with humanity but with the devil, who “has sinned from the beginning” (1 John 3:8). The original sinner, the archetypal sinner, is Satan. Both the origin of sin and the nature of sin are inextricably bound up with Satan.

Now we must go on to see the distinction, made in the Scriptures, between sin and sins. Sin denotes the principle, or nature, of sin, the fundamental character of sin, which is lawlessness. Sins denote the specific acts of disobedience toward God, His word, and His will. Because of the problems of sin and sins, in our Christian experience we need both the forgiveness of sins and the deliverance from sin.

In Romans 5—7 Paul has much to say about sin. He tells us that through one man sin entered into the world (5:12), that sin reigns in death (v. 21), that sin should not be permitted to reign in our mortal bodies (6:12), that sin should not lord it over us (v. 14), that sin takes occasion through the commandment to work in us coveting of every kind (7:8), that sin can revive, deceive us, and kill us (vv. 9, 11), that sin dwells in us, and that it can do many things contrary to our will (vv. 17, 20). In his description of sin and its activities within us, Paul uses many verbs which indicate that sin functions in us virtually as a person with a life and nature of its own. We should not dismiss Paul’s words as mere figurative speech, for his language denotes a dreadful reality which we all must face. There is something within us called sin. This indwelling sin seeks to deceive us, rule us, and kill us.

The nature and activities of indwelling sin are very similar, and in a sense identical, to the nature and activities of Satan. Based on the testimony of Scripture, which is confirmed by human experience, we must say that sin is the evil nature and embodiment of Satan. At the time of the fall of man, Satan injected himself into humankind as the sinful nature that compels us to sin. This means that through the fall of humankind, Satan was injected into man as sin. Thus, in a very real and definite sense, indwelling sin is Satan. On the one hand, Satan exists objectively as a spiritual being; on the other hand, Satan dwells in us subjectively as sin.

The Objective and Subjective Aspects of the Fall

In order to have a thorough and balanced understanding of the fall of humankind, we need to see both aspects of this fall—the objective aspect, which involves outward transgression, and the subjective aspect, which involves inward corruption.

The fall took place through an act of disobedience, a specific outward transgression, a violation of the divine prohibition (Gen. 3:6). God had put Adam under His direct authority that he might learn obedience, but Adam sinned against God's will and rule and thus was disobedient to God's authority. This was an act of rebellion. Through this rebellion, this disobedience, "sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12), and human beings were constituted sinners (v. 19). Humankind came under the judgment of God, the earth was brought under the curse, man was thrust out of paradise, and human beings became subject to death. "In Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22); death reigns over all (Rom. 5:14, 17).

Not only did Adam disobey God's commandment outwardly; he also received something into his being subjectively. This means that the single act of eating the fruit of the forbidden tree had both an objective and a subjective component. The eating of the fruit was objective; the assimilation of the fruit was subjective. In Romans 5—7 Paul covers both aspects, explaining how sin entered humanity through Adam's transgression and act of disobedience and exposing the fact of indwelling sin and the operation of the law of sin within us. Contrary to many theologians and Bible teachers today, Paul was balanced in his understanding of the truth concerning sin. He was clear regarding both the objective and subjective components of the fall of humankind into sin.

We need to be impressed with the fact that when man ate

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, an evil element—sin, the nature of Satan, the lawless one—entered into man's body. The fall, therefore, not only involved an outward transgression but also the receiving of the poisonous element of sin into the human body, which causes human beings to be constituted sinners. As a result, the satanic nature has been wrought into us. Because we have been constituted sinners in this way, we have the evil life and nature of Satan within us.

The sin that dwells within us is actually the life, nature, and disposition of Satan. For this reason, 1 John 3:10 refers to sinners as "the children of the devil." To be a child of the devil is to be begotten of the devil, to have the life and nature of the devil, and to become the devil's kind, Satan's kind. In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father." Since the devil is the father of sinners, fallen human beings are children of the devil, begotten by him to be his reproduction, the same as the devil in life, in nature, in constitution, in function, and in expression. As those born of the devil to be children of the devil, fallen persons possess the life of the devil, partake of the nature of the devil, and, like their father, live in sin habitually. It should be noted here that fallen human beings as children of the devil were not "adopted" by him to be his children merely legally and in position; rather, they were actually begotten of the devil to be his children, the same as their father in his

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devilish life and nature. We should not be shocked, then, to see sinners becoming the practical manifestation and expression of Satan (Matt. 16:23). Furthermore, the words of both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus indicate that sinners, children of the devil, are serpents (3:7; 23:33). Since the Satan is "the ancient serpent" (Rev. 12:9) and since fallen human beings are children of the devil, having the devil as their father, they also are serpents. The process through which Satan turned the human beings created by God into his children, even into serpents, truly is a process of satanification.

This process has affected all three parts of our tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body (1 Thes. 5:23). The body has been transmuted to become the flesh (Rom. 7:18). The soul, the organ for expressing God, has been warped and changed into the self (Matt. 16:23-24). The spirit, the organ for contacting, receiving, containing, and assimilating God, has been deadened (Eph. 2:1). The terrible result is that all fallen, tripartite human beings have been satanified to become intimately involved with an evil trinity composed of Satan, sin, and the flesh. These are now

three-in-one—the issue of Satan’s counterplot against God’s intention to work Himself into His people—and they work together as one to expand and build up the evil kingdom of Satan.

Avoiding Misunderstandings

Not denying the personality of Satan. To teach that Satan has injected himself into humanity as sin with its evil nature is not to deny the personality of Satan or his existence as a personal being. The Bible reveals that indwelling sin operates in human beings as the virtual personification of Satan, functioning as the devil himself in his efforts to deceive, kill, and lord it over us. This aspect of the truth is surely compatible with the notion of Satan’s objective existence as a particular spiritual being, a fallen angel. As we have noted, sin (the nature of Satan) involves both objective transgression and subjective corruption. In like manner, Satan works on us objectively and operates in us subjectively. If we are thorough in our study of the Scriptures on this matter and if we are honest to our spiritual condition as exposed by our experience, we will realize that the sin in our flesh, the sin that dwells within us, is the actual personification of Satan.

We should not claim without qualification that Satan has come personally and directly into the human body. Neither should we argue that fallen human beings are possessed by Satan in the same sense in which demoniacs are possessed by demons. Rather, in faithfulness to God and His word, we should say that Satan as sin has entered into humankind by injecting his life and nature into human beings. Paul’s description of indwelling sin should not be dismissed, as is commonly practiced, as mere figurative language. In Romans 5–7 Paul is not writing poetry—he is presenting the facts of experience. An evil element has been injected into us, and this element, with its life, nature, and disposition, operates within us as if it were a person. The sooner we recognize the seriousness of indwelling sin and the relation between sin and Satan, the sooner we will be open to appropriate God’s provision for deliverance from sin.

Not a denigration of the human body created by God. According to the spiritual understanding given to Paul, the law of sin operates in the members of our body. This is not contrary to the truth that as created by God the human body was pure and good (Gen. 1:31) and that there was nothing inherently evil or sinful about it. Although God created the human body of flesh, blood, and bones, He did not create the human body as it presently is—a body contaminated by sin to become the flesh, the corrupted body (Rom. 7:18). God could not, and did not, create fallen flesh. However, with the fall of humankind, the evil nature of Satan came into the body which God had created pure and good and transmuted that body into a flesh of sin, “the body of sin”

(6:6), and “the body of death” (7:24). Because the God-created body has been corrupted and ruined by sin and transmuted into the flesh, all kinds of lusts are now in the members of our body (Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5). It should now be evident that when Satan injected himself as sin into the human body, the body underwent a change in nature. Formerly, in creation, it was pure and good, but through indwelling sin it has been corrupted and ruined.

The New Testament uses two particular terms to describe the fallen human body corrupted by sin: *the body of sin and the body of death*. The body of sin is filled with the element of sin and is exceedingly active in practicing sin, for there is a power in the fallen body that energizes it to sin. At the same time, the human body is the body of death, and as such it is utterly weak in doing the things of God. With respect to the word of God and the will of God, the body of death is passive and utterly weak, but in committing sin the body of sin is very active. In sinning against God, the fallen body is a body of sin; in obeying the word of God, the fallen body is a body of death. The fact that the God-created human body has become both the body of sin and the body of death proves that the God-created body has undergone a drastic change.

This has nothing to do with gnosticism. The gnostic notion of the human body is that it (like matter itself) is inherently evil. For the gnostic (but not for the Christian) the human body, being material, is intrinsically evil, and salvation consists in the emancipation of the spirit from the body. We condemn this pernicious concept, and we repudiate the unbiblical teaching that the human body is inherently evil. In God’s creation the human body is good, but in the fall the human body, having been corrupted through satanification, is the flesh of sin.

We have pointed out that God’s purpose in His creation of humankind was that tripartite human beings would be born of God, regenerated by God, to become the children of God (no longer merely the creatures of God), possessing the life and nature of God for the expression of God. This is God’s eternal intention. However, in his subtlety and craftiness, Satan, the sinner, devised a scheme to ruin the human vessels created by God. By luring humankind into sin, Satan injected his evil life and nature into human beings, corrupting them and making them Satan in life, nature, constitution, function, and expression. This is satanification, Satan’s counterplot. Whereas God’s goal in creation is for regeneration for a glorious, divine expression, Satan’s aim is satanification for a perverse, devilish expression. The human beings created by God to become His children through regeneration have become the children of the devil through satanification. This is the lamentable condition of the entire human race, but it is not the last word. In His multifarious wisdom, God has a way, through His redemption, to destroy the works of the devil and to fulfill

His purpose. In Christ something marvelous has taken place—the nullification of satanification, which is related to the incarnation of Christ, the ministry of Christ, the crucifixion of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ.

The Incarnation of Christ—the Prerequisite for the Nullification of Satanification

Through the incarnation of Christ, God took a major step toward destroying, annulling, bringing to naught, the devil and his works (Heb. 2:14). A marvelous statement concerning this is found in 1 John 3:8. The first part of the verse says, “He who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning.” Within the devil there is something wicked that is unique to him which caused him to become the source of sin (John 8:44), and because of this wicked thing, possessed only by him, he sinned “from the beginning,” that is, from the time he began to reject God’s rule, rebel against Him, and exalt his throne. “He who practices sin is of the devil” as his source (indicated by *of*, meaning “out of”). The devil, who sinned from the beginning, begets his own kind of children who join him and are one with him in practicing sin (1 John 3:10). They are of their father the devil and want to carry out his evil desires. But in the remaining part of 3:8, John goes on to say, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” For the works of the devil to be destroyed means that they are dissolved, undone, brought to nothing. Christ has brought to naught both the devil himself and his works. For this purpose He was manifested through His incarnation (1:2).

Christ’s incarnation means that God has become flesh. Central to our understanding of the incarnation of Christ is the divine revelation in John 1:14, Romans 8:3, and Hebrews 2:14. John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh.” In the New Testament *flesh* has three principal meanings: the flesh of the human body, the fallen and corrupted body, and fallen humanity considered as a totality. On the one hand, the Bible says that the Word became flesh and even that God was manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16); on the other hand, the Bible reveals that, as flesh, human beings are fallen and sinful. John 1:14 certainly does not mean that the Word, the very God, became a fallen human being. We know from 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Hebrews 4:15 that Christ knew no sin and had no sin.

If we would have the proper understanding of John 1:14, we need to consider Romans 8:3, which says that God

sent His Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin.” We must be deeply impressed with the fact that here Paul does not say that God sent His Son in the flesh of sin; on the contrary, he says that God sent His Son in the *likeness* of the flesh of sin. Long before Christ was incarnated as a man, human flesh had become the flesh of sin, having the satanic element of sin. When the Word became flesh, He became flesh in the sense of coming in the likeness, the appearance, of the flesh of sin but not in the sense of coming in the actuality of the flesh of sin. He became flesh, but in this flesh there was no sin, because He did not have the sinful nature of the flesh of sin. He put on the flesh (human nature) but not the flesh of sin. Therefore, when Christ became flesh, He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin. His flesh was the same as the flesh of sin only in likeness, not in nature. In appearance He was in the form of a fallen human being, but in actuality there was no fallen nature within Him. It was because Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin that He could become flesh without having the element of sin that is in the flesh of fallen human beings.

In order to deal with sin in the flesh and to nullify the devil and his satanifying work, Christ, the Word, the Son, became flesh. Although this flesh shared all the properties of created human nature, it did not have the evil, defiling nature of sin. The incarnation of Christ was a prerequisite for the nullification of satanification.

Hebrews 2:14 speaks of this: “Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil.” This indicates that our Savior is not different in nature from us, for He partook of the same blood and

flesh, becoming a human being but not a fallen human being. Christ became exactly the same as we are, except for sin. The Word became flesh, and Jesus Christ has come in the flesh to be one with us.

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The Ministry of Christ—the Beginning of the Nullification of Satanification

Christ’s ministry on earth was the beginning of the nullification of satanification. Before He began His earthly ministry, He was approved by the Father and tested by the devil (Matt. 3:13—4:11). Although Christ is the God-man, possessing both divinity and humanity, in His encounter with

Satan He stood on the position of a man (4:4). Because Satan is a creature, God the Creator will not lower Himself to deal directly with a creature. Rather, a creature—man—must deal with this rebellious creature, exercising God’s dominion and bringing the kingdom of God to earth. Whereas the first man, Adam, failed miserably in this matter, the second man, Christ, was altogether victorious. In Him the ruler of this world had nothing, that is, no ground and no opportunity (John 14:30). In large measure the Lord’s ministry on earth was a warfare against Satan and a conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. In various ways He began to undo the works of the devil: forgiving sins, healing diseases, raising the dead, and casting out demons. Regarding the casting out of demons, He said, “If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:28). Here we see the conflict between two kingdoms—the kingdom of Satan (v. 26) and the kingdom of God. In His ministry on earth, Christ, God incarnate, was the kingdom of God (Luke 17:20-21), and wherever He was, Satan could not be, and his kingdom sustained serious loss.

The Crucifixion of Christ—the Condemnation of Sin for the Nullification of Satanification

The undoing of the works of Satan that began in the Lord’s ministry culminated with His crucifixion. In His death for our redemption, Christ was the Lamb of God (John 1:29), a man in the flesh (Rom. 8:3), the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), a creature (Col. 1:15), a serpent in form (John 3:14), and our peace and Peacemaker (Eph. 2:14-16). Through the crucifixion of Christ, God solved not only the problem of sins but also the problem of sin in the flesh. As Romans 8:3 reveals, “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” We have seen that the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy, annul, undo, the works of the devil. This thorough and total undoing took place by means of Christ’s death on the cross, through which He condemned sin, which had been initiated by Satan, and destroyed the sinful nature of the devil. Sin has been condemned, and the devil has been destroyed (Heb. 2:14). We may say that by His substitutionary death on the cross for our redemption, Christ accomplished an exorcism of cosmic proportions: The ruler of this world has been cast out. This was nothing less than the utter nullification of satanification.

Although all genuine Christians believe that Christ died on the cross for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24), having offered one sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:12), not many know the meaning of the crucifixion of Christ as it relates to sin and Satan. The cross has dealt not only with our sins, our many transgressions and acts of disobedience, but also with sin, with the principle and power of the sin that dwells in our flesh. In dealing with sin, Christ not only

bore our sins in His body but also was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Because God made Christ sin on our behalf, when He was on the cross He was sin. In the sight of God, He was condemned and crucified as sin, and because He was our Substitute, God regarded Him as if He was sin itself. This means that when Christ died on the cross, He was crucified not only as our Redeemer but also as sin. Through incarnation God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin. Then through the death of Christ on the cross, God condemned sin in the flesh. Therefore, through the redeeming death of Christ, we have not only the forgiveness of sins but also the deliverance from the power of indwelling sin.

The truth of Romans 8:3 is confirmed and illustrated by the truth in John 3:14: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” The bronze serpent lifted up on a pole by Moses in the wilderness was a type of Christ coming in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Num. 21:4-9). The bronze serpent was not a serpent with poison; on the contrary, it was a serpent in form but not in nature, a serpent of bronze made in the likeness of an actual serpent. For the purpose of substitution (in typology), it was sufficient that it be made in the form and likeness of a serpent. In John 3:14 the Lord Jesus applied this type to Himself, indicating thereby that He would become the fulfillment of this type by being lifted up on the cross and being made sin for us. Christ died for us as the fulfillment of the type of the bronze serpent.

Through satanification, fallen human beings had become serpents, with a corrupted being saturated with the serpentine nature and poison of Satan. In His incarnation Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin, becoming the same as sinful human beings in appearance without having the sinful nature within Him. As such a One, He died on our behalf to condemn sin in the flesh. While He was on the cross, God dealt with Him, for our sake, as if He was the embodiment of sin. In the sight of God, Christ was in the form of a serpent because He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin. We praise the Lord that He died as our Substitute in the form of a serpent in order to nullify the serpentine nature within us!

Christ’s death on the cross was also the means by which God destroyed the devil. When Christ was lifted up in the form of a serpent and in the likeness of the flesh of sin, Satan was destroyed and cast out. As John 12:31-32 demonstrates, the casting out of the ruler of this world is connected to the death of Christ on the cross. Through incarnation the Lord Jesus put on the likeness of the flesh of sin, and then He brought this flesh to the cross and crucified it. In this way, Satan, who had injected himself into humankind as sin, was destroyed, annulled, brought to nought, as Hebrews 2:14 testifies. Christ partook of blood

and flesh for the purpose of destroying the devil. This indicates clearly that apart from the incarnation, in which Christ took upon Himself the likeness of the flesh of sin, and the crucifixion, in which He dealt with sin, there would have been no way for God to destroy Satan or nullify satanification. The prophecy in Genesis 3:15 has been fulfilled: The seed of the woman—Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man—has crushed the head of the serpent. Sin has been condemned. Satan has been destroyed. Satanification has been nullified.

This should cause us to have a deeper appreciation of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.” *World* here denotes the totality of fallen, sinful human beings who constitute the world as a system and who have been satanified to become serpents, the same as the devil, the serpent, in life and in nature. God’s only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, came in the likeness of the flesh of sin and died in the form of the serpent, fulfilling the type of the bronze serpent. For God to so love the world “that He gave His only begotten Son” does not only mean that Christ died for our sins; it also means that God gave His Son in the sense that He sent Him in the likeness of the flesh of sin, made Him sin on our behalf, and gave Him up to die on the cross in the form of the serpent so that God could condemn sin and destroy Satan.

The Spirit of Christ —the Application of the Nullification of Satanification

First Peter 3:18 and 19 say, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the Spirit; in which also He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison.” While Christ was being put to death in the flesh, He was being made alive in the Spirit, in the Spirit as the essence of His divinity. In this Spirit He proclaimed, probably in the abyss (Rom. 10:7), to certain rebellious angels His victory over Satan and his counterplot to foil God’s economy. Thereafter, having obtained the keys of death and of Hades (Rev. 1:18), He was released from the pangs of death (Acts 2:24) and came forth in the glory of His resurrection (Luke 24:26; Acts 3:13).

Christ was resurrected both physically and spiritually. Physically, He was resurrected with a body of flesh

and bones (Luke 24:39), which is a mysterious body of glory (Phil. 3:21). As such a One, He has been exalted to the right hand of God to carry out, as God’s anointed One, God’s administration in the universe. Spiritually, in resurrection Christ has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), the pneumatic Christ. As such a One He dwells within us to live in us and to make real to us all that He accomplished, obtained, and attained in His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Now the nullification of satanification wrought through the incarnation, human living, and crucifixion of Christ is applied to us in Christ’s resurrection and ascension by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9).

What has been accomplished through the crucifixion of Christ should not remain a mere objective doctrine to us. If the truth regarding the nullification of satanification is to affect our daily living, it must be made real to us in an experiential way by the Spirit of Christ. It is Christ who dealt with Satan, but it is the Spirit of reality who convicts the world of judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged (John 16:8-11). Likewise, it is a fact that our

old man has been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6), but it is the Spirit who makes Christ’s death real, applicable, and effective to us in our experience. Hence, in order to experience the reality of Christ’s dealing with sin and Satan, we need the person and work of the Spirit.

However, if we are fleshly believers, those who continue to live in the flesh and walk in the flesh, in our daily living we will be plagued by sin and Satan as if they had not been dealt with through Christ’s death on the cross. It is possible to have a doctrinal or theological understanding of the nullification of satanification—of the condemnation of sin in the flesh and of the destruction of the devil and his works—yet be defeated by sin and Satan in our daily life simply because we do not live by the Spirit and walk according to the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 24-25; Rom. 8:4, 13). The objective truth concerning the nullification of satanification is based upon the finished work of Christ on the cross, through which sin in the flesh has been condemned and the devil, the source of sin, has been destroyed. The application of this truth and its subjective reality in our experience depends upon the Spirit and upon our living and walking in oneness with the Lord in spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). As we live in the mingled spirit, the regenerated human spirit mingled with the Spirit of reality, we are released from the effects of satanification, and we are free in Christ to fulfill God’s purpose in creation, regeneration, and deification for His eternal corporate expression. **■AFC**

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