

[Ephesians 2:1-3](#)

(1) And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (2) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, (3) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

New King James Version

[Satan](#) subtly persuaded Adam and Eve that by taking the knowledge of good and evil, they would be like gods, and by this he inserted himself as a rival to [God](#) for man's loyalty. He implied that they could institute their own ways and standards. However, he concealed from them that he would influence mankind in establishing those ways and standards so that he, the ruler of [this world](#), would be sovereign and obeyed. The result of this is that those who submit to him are made in the Devil's image, rather than God's.

Satan, eminently successful in his ruse, has been imitated by all mankind. By the time God calls us, we are thoroughly in his image. We are so indoctrinated into his way of life that even by nature we are children of wrath!

Satan cunningly hides something else from Adam and Eve: His brand of freedom to establish standards and to choose creates tremendous diversity and thus a constant and wearying confusion. When vanity enters this mix, the result is divorce in the family, social problems in the community, and on a larger scale, bloody warfare. Mankind has paid a horrible price for wrongly choosing Satan as sovereign.

From His nature of love and wisdom, God pre-determined what is right and beautiful, and He taught Adam and Eve His way of life, instruction now included in His Word. If we want to achieve His purpose and be in His image, unlike our first parents, we must limit our free moral agency to choosing whether to submit to the universal, life-encompassing standards He has already determined.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Sovereignty of God: Part Six](#)

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