

THE LITTLE BOY WHO TRAMPLED SATAN UNDERFOOT

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One day he was outdoors and saw a huge deadly snake heading straight for him. He was standing just outside the back door of a friend's house where he was visiting. He yelled, "Grab a club" that he kept behind the door. He barely had time to get it when that poisonous snake was right before him, its head held high ready to attack.

He had never done this before in his life, but he beat that snake furiously with that club. It was either the snake dies or he die! If the snake had gotten to him first, he would have been finished. He beat him on the head so hard that he died. When it was over, he felt like a hero! He walked on cloud nine for a week.

Long ago in the beginning when Satan had rebelled against God and led our first parents, Adam and Eve, to sin, God promised something wonderful. He told Satan that Someone would come who would trample him underfoot. Eve's "offspring [Jesus] will crush your head" (Gen. 3:15). Jesus came and He did it. And when He stomped all over Satan, He stomped all over Satan's evil angels, too. And yes, it was a little Boy who did it. Let's see how He did it.

When Jesus grew up, He told us that we can trample on Satan, too; and if we don't do it, Satan will trample over us. And we don't want that, do we? We all must choose one or the other. We are in a

great war—we can't sit in the bleachers and just watch. And children are as important as grown-ups; they choose also, and Jesus invites you to join Him in stomping Satan underfoot.

It wasn't only on His cross that Jesus saved the world. He started doing it when He was only a Baby. When the Bible speaks of Jesus' birth, it says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

How could a Baby have all those great names? It's because He was the Son of God as well as "our" Son. His Father was God, but He is also "our heavenly Father" because of Jesus.

But notice what it says about Him when He was only a Baby: "The government shall be upon His shoulder." No other baby in all the world has ever had such a burden laid on his shoulder! In the United States, we are not allowed to lay "the government" upon the "shoulder" of any man (that is, to become President) who is younger than thirty-five. But here the "government" is laid upon the "shoulder" of a Baby! Grown-ups become very quiet when they think about this. It's something marvelous.

There is a great war going on between the "government" of God, and Satan with his evil angels. It's not fought with guns and tanks; it's the battle behind all other battles. It's with sin, and every human heart is the battlefield. The heart of Jesus, when He was a Boy, was included too. He

couldn't sit on the bleachers either, for He was down here in the arena fighting to overcome sin once for all. Satan had invented sin and claimed that it was so strong no one could overcome it. This proved, he said, that he was stronger and better than God. And Jesus had to prove he was wrong, or the universe itself would eventually come apart!

If Satan had gotten Jesus as even a Baby to say or do something selfish, then he would have won this great war. No one knows how a little baby can choose to be selfish or unselfish, but we do know that all of us have been born self-centered by nature. Jesus as a Baby was tempted to be selfish just as much as any of us are tempted, but He always chose to be unselfish.

As a Child, He knew all our temptations to be lazy, to do or say wrong things. He "took" the same nature we have inherited from our fallen great-great-grandfather Adam. Of course, the "battles" that He fought as an infant were those of an infant. But as He grew up, the battles became harder and harder. It was always a battle with "self." Where we have lost our battles with self, He won.

He says, "I am not trying to do what I want, but only what He who sent Me wants" (that means, His Father). "I have come down from heaven to do not My own will but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30; 6:38).

Does this mean that all His life on earth Jesus had to work hard? Never had any fun? Always fighting battles? We know He had fun, for He loved doing the good things that make us happy. But yes, He always was on His guard not to let Satan capture

Him. And yes, we have a Savior who once was a Baby, and even then He won all His battles with Satan!

Children who read the Bible can easily find the places where Jesus invites them to follow Him: "Jesus said, 'Let the children come to Me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'" (Matt. 19:13, 14). And then there is the last page of the Bible; it was probably the first page of the entire Bible that I ever read when I was a child: "The [Holy] Spirit and the Bride, say, 'Come!' Everyone who hears this must say, 'Come!' Come, whoever is thirsty, accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it" (Rev. 22:17).

For the first time in His life, Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth and walked the eighty miles to Jerusalem. He must have loved the trip, for it was springtime and all the flowers were in bloom. He always loved being outdoors. Even today, it's loads more fun than sitting watching screens.

He made this long walking trip to attend the Passover because He wanted to watch the priests kill the innocent little creature that was called the Passover lamb. He asked what it meant, why were they doing it, but nobody could tell Him. Not even Mary, His mother.

As He watched, an idea came to Him. The Passover lamb couldn't save anyone by its death; its blood was animal blood; couldn't wash away even one tiny little sin. This was only a kindergarten "sandbox" kind of lesson. The little lamb represented Somebody very important who would

come to die for the world. Someone was to become the “Lamb of God.” The priests all said that sin could not be forgiven unless the lamb dies, and that was true; but Jesus thought it all through. He understood that when that One comes who is to be the real Lamb of God, He too must die instead of all the people dying. He would put an end to all animals being killed for sin.

Then Jesus began to realize that the Father was calling Him to become the Lamb of God! Can you imagine a Boy of twelve thinking things like that? He chose to say “Yes!” to that call. Yes, He will grow up to say always, “Yes!” to His Father’s will and to say “No!” to His own will. This was when He told His parents, “I must be about My Father’s business” (Luke 2:49, KJV). Big load for a Boy to carry!

No other twelve-year-old child has ever done that. The “government” was on His “shoulder,” and He bore the heavy load. Isaiah says, “He endured the suffering that should have been ours. . . . Because of our sins He was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment He suffered, made whole by the blows He received” (Isa. 53:4, 5).

Behold the amazing work of love! He tabernacles in human flesh, a Boy of tender years, with the mysterious past all unknown to Him except by faith in the Written Word. He makes the same decision which as Commander of the heavenly hosts He made in the councils of heaven. *He chooses to go to the cross.*

When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us, we choose the way of the cross as readily as the Son of God chose it in the heavenly council ages ago, and again as a Boy of twelve in the Jerusalem temple. In each instance, whether in the heart of the Son of God or in the heart of a believing sinner, the results lead to resurrection—which is as much a part of the principle as is the cross. There is Good News: “He who hates his life in this world will keep it for life eternal” (John 12:25).

There are two crosses: the cross of Christ, and the cross for you and me on which we die with Christ as did the penitent thief. There was a third cross at Calvary, but there was no redemption for the impenitent thief who died on it. He was caught in a suffering and death to which he never surrendered. Rebellious, he cursed his fate and God unto the bitter end, *and perished*. Shall we rebel against the principle of the cross and follow him to eternal darkness?

Bearing our cross is made easy through seeing that other cross on which our divine Example died. Through understanding His cross, we can discern our own and find strength to bear it gladly.

Oh, how Satan hated Him! Time and again, the Enemy tried to trick Him into doing or saying something selfish, but Jesus defeated Satan every time, right down to the end when on His cross He said No! to the last temptation of Satan. The point is that Jesus won the great battle! This is how He trampled Satan underfoot. And He started doing it even when He was only a Child!

Nazareth was so bad that Nathaniel asked Philip, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”¹ Something good did come out! Good news for any youth who lives in a bad neighborhood! Jesus was not exempt from the real problems we have today.

No youth needs to yield to temptation, if he understands the good news of the gospel. But confusing sentiments from antichrist ideas of the gospel infiltrate our thinking. Let the Lord speak to you in your Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy. And don't accept anything I may say as your pastor unless you check it according to God's Word. As a teenager, Jesus studied His Bible and refused to let anyone mislead Him. When Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation,”² he means there is powerful good news in it. If a youth has gone astray, very likely the reason is that those false concepts from Babylon have somehow confused him. Jesus overcame completely in a difficult environment.

Those were painful years for Him. He was “subject to” His parents. Not that He agreed with them all the time, but still He was “subject to” them. What a comedown—from the theological seminary in the Temple to the junior division in His local Sabbath school, where He had to sit and listen.

It was His habit to go to the synagogue every Sabbath. He had to hear the most awful sermons you can imagine that misrepresented the character of God. And for all those seventeen years He was forced Sabbath after Sabbath to see people misled

¹ John 1:46.

² Romans 1:16.

by the false teaching of the leaders of Israel. He did what He could to counteract this false doctrine, I'm sure, because we know He would speak to individuals and try to encourage them, “God isn't like that. He is your loving heavenly Father.” But there wasn't much He could do. He preached the gospel as best He could by His life. He didn't try to grow up too fast. He was content to be as young as He was, “subject to” His parents.

Not only did He have problems with His parents, but also with His older stepbrothers and stepsisters. And with His teachers. But the worst problem Jesus had was with His neighbors.

Something happened during His ministry that you can't understand except in the light of those hidden years at Nazareth. When He was grown-up, He came back to visit His home town. “When the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him?’” The word “Man” is in italics; it's not in the Greek. What they actually said was, “How does this kid know all these things? We're astonished.” They grumbled, “Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon?” It never crossed their minds that He would be the Son of God. ‘And they were offended at Him.’³

Luke goes into more detail. When this young man got up in church that Sabbath morning, He asked

³ Mark 6:1-3.

for the Bible, and somebody handed Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus quietly opened it to chapter 61 and began to read the wonderful story of the Messiah. What a glorious work He's going to do when He comes!

Those villagers were smiling, so happy to hear about the coming Messiah. Someday He will drive out the hated Romans and make us a great nation! Then Jesus rolls up the scroll, quietly sets it aside, and announces simply, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' I am the Messiah. I've come to do this work."

Then the trouble began. Jesus could see His neighbors were rejecting His message. So He told two stories. When the Lord wanted to feed His prophet Elijah, He sent Him to a Gentile widow. Why? Not one in the whole of Israel had the faith to take care of the prophet of God!

The second story Jesus told was about Elisha. There were plenty of lepers in Israel, but not one had faith to be healed except Namaan the heathen. Then Jesus' neighbors got so angry that they "rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff."⁴

Many churches would never employ Jesus as a minister, because they say you've got to make it in your own home town first, before we'll listen to you, and Jesus' home village rejected Him. He had to walk alone.

⁴ Luke 4:16-29.

We read that "His mother kept all these things in her heart." There are mothers who don't know how to talk to their children. Many teenagers tell me, "I just can't talk with my parents." Mary was apparently a very quiet person. For example, she never told Jesus who He was; He learned it by the Holy Spirit. So she couldn't be much help to Him in planning His ministry or preparing Him for His work.

Jesus had to pray, or He would have failed. While Hebrews 5:7-9 speaks of Him as an adult, it also speaks of His youth: "In the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him that was able to save Him from death, [He] was heard because of His godly fear." The word for "fear" is not *phobos* (from which we get *phobia*). Jesus never feared in the sense of terror, but He revered His heavenly Father. "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."⁵

Did you get that? Jesus prayed with tears. He loved to go out in the woods and pray. And young people, if you go out in the forest all alone with the squirrels and the deer and the birds and kneel down beneath the open sky and talk to your heavenly Father, you've missed something wonderful. Every time Jesus saw a tree, He longed to kneel down and pray.

Muslims tell us that when Jesus died on His cross, He died a sad, defeated Man. But they are mistaken. When He finally cried with a loud voice, "It is finished!" His face was shining like the sun. He

⁵ Hebrews 5:8, 9.

died so happy, knowing that because He won the victory, you and I will live forever in God's everlasting kingdom.