

HEALING STREAM MINISTRIES presents...

THE UNDILUTED, FULL STRENGTH, THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES
with enough power to...

- **cleans** from all sin
- **set us free** from all bondage
- **break all the power** of the enemy over us
- **restore us to total spiritual health**
- **develop immunity** to all last-day deceptions

#41 – Protection Against Satan's Identity Theft

Daily we hear a great deal about 'identity' – identity theft, identity crisis, identity disorder, identity cards, et cetera. Our identity consists of those distinguishing traits of personhood, and even character, by which we, and others, define ourselves uniquely as who we are. As I have studied the prophecies concerning the beast of Revelation, I have come to believe that there is MORE to the beast than just the historical applications. As a matter of fact, would we not set ourselves up for deception if we failed to see the "beast principle" wherever it occurs in human life and experience? Could it be that the beast principle has something to do with our identity? I would suggest that the enemy, Satan, wants to create inside of us an identity crisis by his practice of the temptation of identity theft in order that we may have an identity disorder so we are spiritually disabled to know who we really are.

Satan has been in the identity-theft business for a long time. While still in heaven he sought to steal God's identity ("*I will be like the Most High*"). In the Garden of Eden he urged Eve to discover a new and higher identity (*You shall be as gods*) through discontent with her existing identity.

The core of our immunity against Satan's temptations resides in our God-given identity. Our identity is like the operating system of a computer. When the operating system crashes, the entire computer crashes. Because Satan wants our lives to crash, he deceitfully masquerades many of his temptations as quests for an improved personal identity. Question your personal identity of who you are, and immediately you open your life to the invasion of Satan's "computer" viruses designed to cause your life to crash.

Remember how in the wilderness temptations Satan prefaced two of his temptations with attacks on Christ's identity, *IF you are the Son of God...* then turn stones into bread...jump off the pinnacle of the temple. Satan was not really tempting Jesus to do something evil, but to do something good for himself. Between the lines you can hear Satan's taunts – *Your God is not doing such a good job in taking care of you. So, if you are the Son of God, you have before you a golden opportunity to help God do a better job. If you are really the Son of God, prove it. A Son of God should not have to endure hardships like you are experiencing.* At the cross he repeated this attack on Christ's identity, *"IF you are the Son of God, come down from the cross..."*

Notice how often you have heard people say, *I just need to discover who I really am!* As if life consists of the accumulation of having "*been there, done that*" experiences, only to discover at some later point in time that others have already "*been there, and done that.*"

The undermining of our identity is really at the core of all our temptations. Look at it this way:

- The enemy's lie: *What you do determines who you are.* Discover your identity by what you do, your own accomplishments.
- God's truth: *Who you are determines what you do.* You have no need to search for your identity through what you do, because you already know who you are and whose you are.

Did you know that God has provided a secure protection against Satan's attempts to steal your identity? It is found in the first four of the Ten Commandments. Certain key words there speak about worshipping one God, His image, His name, and His number. These four commandments contain God's very own encoding for the protection of our identity. This code guards us against trying to discover an identity in something or someone other than God. Take note of these key words [image, name, and number] as found in the first four commandments of the Decalogue.

- **Accept your identity.** *I am the Lord your God.*
- **Accept the origins of your identity.** *...who brought you out of Egypt.*
- **Find your identity in ONE God.** *"You shall have no other gods before me."*
- **Protect your identity.** *"You shall not make unto you any graven IMAGE...you shall not bow down yourself to them or serve them."* Do not invent and worship substitutes for God made in your own image.
- **Protect God's identity:** *"You shall not take the NAME of the Lord your God in vain."* Do not play God!
- **Celebrate your identity.** *"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy...the seventh day [the NUMBER] is the Sabbath of the Lord your God."*

The final contest in the last days is over worship. Everyone worships something or someone because God has created us to be worshipers. The object of our worship determines our identity. Flawed worship is to let our lives become programmed by the image, name, and number of our idols. Those who worship idols, themselves become worthless (Jeremiah 10:3, Jonah 2:8). In genuine worship we receive the image, name, and number of the God we worship. In false or counterfeit worship we reject the identity with which God has already created us. We then try to establish an identity, a name for ourselves, through something we do, somehow hoping that our performance plus the opinions of others will give us a secure self-worth. True worship is living our lives as programmed by the identity God has already given us.

By contrast, Revelation 15:1-2 speaks about those who have overcome the beast, his image, his name, and number (Satan's identity theft through counterfeit worship). This passage might actually be a pun rooted in certain key words of the first four commandments – image, name, and number. In addition to the historical applications of the beast, the beast principle is also any replacement or substitute [idol] for God because we do not believe He is big enough to handle our lives. Remember how the Israelites created a beast, a golden calf, to worship when they quit trusting in the God who had delivered them. At its core 'beast worship' is essentially idolatry. Remember the closing lines of First John, the book which discusses the work of the antichrist – *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols"* (1 John 5:21).

Thus the enemy's version of the first four commandments might go like this:

- **Reject your identity.** Your identity does not rest in a God you cannot see, but in your own accomplishments.
- **Do not believe in what God says about the origins of your identity.** You are essentially on your own, and it is up to you to make it through life the best you can.
- **Find your identity in many gods.** One God is not enough, because the current God you serve is semi-competent and limited.
- **Enhance your make-believe identity** by custom-designing gods made in your own image. [the image of the beast – your substitute for god].
- **Take advantage of your make-believe identity:** Make a name for yourself by playing god. Never mind that you will damage others and eventually destroy yourself. Use that name to control others rather than serving others.
- **Your make-believe identity only delivers insecurity and unrest.** [the number of the beast, six, signifies incompleteness].

In genuine worship our self-worth and identity becomes so securely embedded and programmed into our minds (or hearts) through the first four commandments (one God, His image, His name, and His number) that we develop an impenetrable immunity to all the lies of the enemy. This is how temptations lose their power. Not by the gritting of our teeth and trying harder, but in securely resting in the identity with which we were created and redeemed. When we receive the gift of God's saving grace, we also receive with that gift a new identity as God's very own children. *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God"* (1 John 3:1).

What is genuine worship? It is our responses to the acts of God in Creation and in Calvary's cross.

- *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things"* (Revelation 4:11).
- *"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessings"* (Revelation 5:12).

Thus genuine worship is the basis for all secure self-worth – self-worth based on what God says about us, and not on our performance plus the opinions of others.

What does God say about you? The same words He said about His Son at His baptism in the river Jordan. Believe those words! Then your identity will be securely anchored in Jesus Christ, and you will know that you are also God's *"beloved child in whom He is well pleased!"*