

A full-page photograph of a knight in plate armor. The knight is wearing a helmet with a visor and a faceplate with a grid of holes. He is holding a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left. The background is a cloudy sky with some debris or sparks in the air.

The Destroyer

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Dejan Andov with Adrian Ebens



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Psalm 78:43-48 describes the plagues that fell upon Egypt before the people of Israel was delivered from slavery. We read:

How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. (Psalm 78:43-48)

Now please read verse 49 carefully:

*He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, **by sending evil angels among them.** (Psalm 78:49)*

Here we are told that the plagues that fell upon Egypt involved evil angels, which can only mean they were demons. There are certainly no evil angels in heaven who cheerfully follow God's will.

Now, can we find what the evil angels were doing in Egypt at the time of plagues?

Let us read Exodus 12:12:

***For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn** in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: **I am the LORD.** (Exodus 12:12)*

"I WILL PASS THROUGH... AND WILL SMITE... I AM THE LORD". From this verse it is clear that the tenth plague or destruction of the firstborn in Egypt was the judgment of the Lord. The verse seems to indicate that the Lord personally, directly, will destroy all the firstborn of Egypt, but let us read what verse 23 says in the same chapter:

*For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, **and will not suffer THE DESTROYER to come in unto your houses to smite you.***
(Exodus 12:23)

Here we have an entirely different picture; namely it is not the LORD who will with His hand destroy the firstborn but someone who is called "the Destroyer". Who is this? We have another reference to the destroyer in 1 Corinthians 10:10:

*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of **THE DESTROYER.*** (1 Corinthians 10:10)

The word for destroyer has this meaning in the Greek. From G3645; a ruiner, that is, (specifically) **a venomous serpent**: - destroyer.

This is about Israel in the desert where some of them were destroyed by the destroyer. Again this verse is not clear as to who is the destroyer. Most people think it is the Lord because, they say, He was the one who punished the people in the wilderness. Yet in Exodus 12:23 see that it can't be the Lord for He was the one who allowed or prevented the destroyer from destroying.

Another reference to the destroyer we have in Revelation 9:11:

*And they had a king over them, which is **the angel of the bottomless pit**, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is **Abaddon**, but in the Greek tongue hath his name **Apollyon**. (Revelation 9:11)*

The word "ABADDON" or "APOLLYON" means "DESTROYER". So, this angel of the bottomless pit is the Destroyer. Who is he? The Bible explains itself,

*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw **a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit**. (Revelation 9:1)*

I think it is clear as to who is this star that was fallen from heaven unto the earth. It's Satan. SATAN IS THE DESTROYER!

Ellen White confirms what we find in the Bible. She states that Satan is called the Destroyer in the Scriptures.

Satan is the great enemy of God and man. He transforms himself through his agents into angels of light. **In the Scriptures he is called a destroyer**, an accuser of the brethren, a deceiver, a liar, a tormentor, and a murderer. (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 137)

Satan is the destroyer. (*Banner*, March 1, 1905)

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."
1 Peter 5:8

In contrast we see what Jesus says about destroying.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:56)

In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. (*Desire of Ages*, p. 25)

Satan is the destroyer, but Christ is the restorer. (*Review & Herald*, November 26, 1895)

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." John 8:44

If Christ revealed a character opposite to Satan, then is there any time He would reveal a character the same as Satan and destroy people? In how much of Christ's work did He teach that He would destroy people?

He came to lift up man. It was provided that whosoever should believe in Christ as his personal Saviour should be saved. **In all his works he taught men that it was his mission not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.** (*Signs of the Times*, July 2, 1896 par. 3)

In all of Christ's works He taught men that it was not His mission to destroy. It was His mission to reveal the Father by saving, redeeming, and rescuing.

Christ came to the world to seek and save the lost. When accused by the Pharisees of eating with publicans and sinners, He replied, "I am not come to call the [professedly] righteous, but sinners to repentance." **He came to save, not to destroy. Souls are very precious in His sight; for by creation and by redemption they are His.** (*Medical Ministry*, p. 183)

The Lord seeks to save, not to destroy. He delights in the rescue of sinners. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Ezekiel 33:11. **By warnings and entreaties He calls the wayward to cease from their evil-doing and to turn to Him and live.** He gives His chosen messengers a holy boldness, that those who hear may fear and be brought to repentance. (*Prophets & Kings*, pp. 104,105)

It is not part of the Divine nature to destroy but to reconstruct.

Redemption is part of the divine nature. It is the prerogative of God to have to reconstruct, not to destroy. The Son of God was given to die before the foundation of the world. The existence of sin is unexplainable; therefore not a soul knows what God is until he sees himself in the light reflected from the cross of Calvary, and detests himself as a sinner in the bitterness of his soul. (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 264, 265)

This same character is in the angels. They are not sent from heaven to destroy but to save.

Angels are sent from the heavenly courts, not to destroy, but to watch over and guard imperiled souls, to save the lost, to bring the straying ones back to the fold. “I came not to condemn, but to save,” Christ declared. Have you, then, no pitying words to speak to the straying? Will you let them perish, or will you reach out to them a helping hand? (*Review & Herald*, May 10, 1906)

So it is clear who the evil angels are who were "sent" to Egypt? It was Satan and his demons that destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt.

The Hebrew word for **sending** in Psalm 78:49 means "to release or discharge."

"... How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together? How can Christ and the Devil agree? ..."
2 Corinthians 6:14-15,
GNB

Now, perhaps some will jump in here complaining that I made God and Satan collaborators and friends, where Satan is fulfilling God's plans.

No, I did not do this under any circumstances. God and Satan are not friends. The truth is that Satan is a destroyer just waiting to destroy all those who are not under God's special protection. In the case of Egypt, those were all the firstborn. If the power of

God had not protected the others, Satan would have destroyed all the Egyptians. Ellen White speaks about the impatience of the destroyer to destroy in the following text:

Thus the archfiend clothes with his own attributes the Creator and Benefactor of mankind. Cruelty is satanic. God is love; and all that He created was pure, holy, and lovely, until sin was brought in by the first great rebel. Satan himself is the enemy who tempts man to sin, and then destroys him if he can; and when he has made sure of his victim, then he exults in the ruin he has wrought. **If permitted, he would sweep the entire race into his net. Were it not for the interposition of divine power, not one son or daughter of Adam would escape.** (*Great Controversy*, p. 534.2)

Lucifer became the destroyer of those whom heaven had committed to his guardianship. (*Australian Union Conference Record*, October 1, 1906)

Now, Sister White in describing the end-time judgments of God is suggesting that the judgments of Egypt were shadows and says:

“When the destroying angel was to pass through Egypt, to destroy the first-born of man and beast, Israel was commanded to gather their children and families into their houses with them, and then mark their door-posts with blood, that the destroying angel might pass by their dwellings, and if they failed to go through with this process, there was no difference made between them and the Egyptians.

The destroying angel is soon to go forth again, not to destroy the first-born alone, but "to slay utterly old and young, both men, women and little children" who have not the mark. Parents, if you wish to save your children, separate them from the world..." (*Review & Herald*, October 14, 1875)

So what is represented by the command to slay utterly old and young, both men, women and children? This is the command of Ezekiel 9 and the men with the slaughter weapons:

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: **Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women:** but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.
(Ezekiel 9:2-6)

What does the slaying of young and old with the slaughter weapons mean?

Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval. **They will fall in**

the general destruction of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons.
(*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 3, p. 267)

So the work of the five men bearing the slaughter weapons means the general destruction of the wicked. How does this general destruction take place? Note carefully the following statements.

I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, "My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!" Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, "Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads."

I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. **He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed,** and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the

four angels and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads. (*Early Writings*, p. 38.1-2)

We see that the angels of God are restraining the forces of evil until the servants of God are sealed. When this work is done and Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then the winds are released and Satan is given full control to plunge the world into the great time of trouble that follows the pattern of the destruction of Jerusalem:

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. **The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent.** God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. **The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.** (*Great Controversy*, p. 614.1)

So, the same destroying angel who passed through Egypt to destroy the first-born will pass through again to destroy all who have not the mark of God.

Again we ask, who is this destroying angel? We already stated it was Satan, but do we have more evidences for this claim? Here is the answer:

Just before the firstborn were slain in Egypt, the Lord instructed the Israelites to gather their children into their houses with them, and to strike the lintel and the two side posts of their doors with blood, so that when the destroying angel went through the land, he would recognize the houses thus marked as the dwelling places of Christ's followers, and pass over them.

Today we must gather our children about us, if we desire to save them **from the destructive power of THE EVIL ONE**. The conflict between Christ and Satan will increase in intensity until the end of this earth's history. We are to have faith in the blood of Christ, in order that we may pass safely through the perilous times just before us" (*Sermons & Talks*, Vol. 2. p. 199)

I think this quote resolves all our doubts. There is only one who is the evil one and who is the destroyer from the beginning, SATAN!

Jesus knocks; will you open the door unto Him? **Shall He be compelled to write upon the lintel of the doorway, in the place of His blood that cleanseth from all sin, the sentence that leaves you to the power of the destroying angels? "He is joined to his idols." Guardian angels, "let him alone." [Hosea 4:17.] "How often I would have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not." [Matthew 23:37]. To all who will open the door, Jesus comes in and takes possession. (*Letter 30a*, 1892)**

In sorrow Jesus withdraws from those who refuse to come into His full protection. They are left to the power of the destroyer. But there are some quotes that seem to state that it was an angel of God. What do we make of this quote?

... the angel of God would be passing through the land of Egypt doing his dreadful work, slaying the first-born of man and the first-born of beast. (*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, p. 199)

Are we to take this quote and throw out the rest of our study so far? There are two ways to resolve this by taking in all the facts.

1. Even fallen angels can be referred to as angels of God. This is because God takes responsibility (Job 1:11-12,16; 2:3-7; Psalm 62:11; Romans 13:1). See texts where God "sends" evil spirits. For example:

God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech. Judges 9:23

*And it came to pass, when **the evil spirit from God** was upon Saul, that David took an harp and played with his hand ... 1 Samuel 16:23*

*Now therefore, behold, **the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets**, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. 1 Kings 22:23*

Are we to understand that God is directly doing this? That He is working directly with evil angels? Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the last verse, explains it clearly:

“He hath *permitted* or *suffered* a lying spirit to influence thy prophets. Is it requisite again to remind the reader that the Scriptures repeatedly represent God as *doing* what, in the course of his providence, he only *permits* or *suffers* to be done? Nothing can be done in heaven, in earth, or hell, but either by his immediate *energy* or *permission*. This is the reason why the Scripture speaks as above.” [italics in original commentary on 1 Kings 22:23]

We remember that Psalm 78:49, talking about the coming out of Egypt said:

*“He (God) cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by **sending (Hebrew can be ‘releasing’) evil angels among them.**”*

Young’s Literal Translation calls it “A discharge of evil messengers.”

When the writers of Scripture refer to God as the One who destroys they are using an Hebraic idiom. Commenting on 2 Chronicles 25:16, which says, “God hath determined to destroy thee”, Robert Young explained that the passage is “a well-known scripture idiom whereby what God allows he is said to do.” (Young, Robert, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible, as Literally and Idiomatically Translated out of the Original Languages*, p. 315, 1868).

One of the numerous idioms among the Hebrews was the **permissive idiom**. Since the Hebrew idioms, including the permissive idiom, carries over into the New Testament, then when we read in 1 Cor. 3:17, “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy,” **we can understand this as permissive rather than causative**.

When God forsakes or abandons His temple then that is the removal of His protection, to which He permits those enemies already poised to destroy to have their way:

'I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.' (Jer 12:7).

In the same epistle in which we are warned that God would destroy those who destroy His temple, we learn how church rebels are disciplined:

'To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1 Cor 5:5)." (Ray Foucher, *characterofgod.org*.)

*"God destroys no man
... men destroy their
own souls. You are
not to say that God is
to blame ... The
responsibility rests
upon the sinner." RH,
Feb. 17, 1891*

We can also apply this permissive idiom to Revelation 11:18 which says: "Thy wrath is come" in which God "shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Paul plainly tells us that God's wrath is giving the unrepentant person over to their own selfish desires, resulting in self-destruction (Romans 1:18-28).

2. The other option is the angel of God referred to here is the angel that orders guardian angels to stand down. In this scenario, this angel would be going to each house, seeing if there was the blood of the Passover there, and then telling the angel of that house to stop protecting. Then Satan would have power to do as he will. We remind the reader again of the quote previously mentioned:

Shall He be compelled to write upon the lintel of the doorway, in the place of His blood that cleanseth from all sin, **the sentence that leaves you to the power of the destroying angels?** “He is joined to his idols.” Guardian angels, “let him alone.” (*Letter 30a*, 1892)

To add weight to the fact that this is not a holy angel directly murdering, we read a little further on in *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol 1 from the “angel of God” that:

The blood sprinkled upon the door-posts pre-figured the atoning blood of Christ, and also the continual dependence of sinful man upon the merits of that blood for safety **from the power of Satan**, and for final redemption. (*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol.1, p. 201.1)

“Satanic power is the power of God, perverted by sin. The Creator so respects Satan’s free will, that He gives him power to do that which is contrary to the divine will. This power however is limited.” A.T Jones, *American Sentinel*, August 25, 1898

So in the same chapter Sister White is saying that the blood on the door-posts, representing the blood Christ, protected “from the power of Satan.” Ellen White would seem to be using language that reflects the language of the Bible, and in her later writings she would explain what is happening more clearly than at the time she wrote *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1.

The whole process of the withdrawal of protection and subsequent destruction is laid out

in detail in the first chapter of *Great Controversy*– ‘The Destruction of Jerusalem.’ The Spirit of prophecy makes the parallel between the destruction of Jerusalem and when Christ said “your house is left unto you desolate.” This parallel is important because it provides more clues to what happened in Egypt.

The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. **Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work.** By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. **The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control.** (*Great Controversy*, p. 35.3)

It was the same process of destruction in both Egypt and Jerusalem; they were left to the power of Satan. This is the process of how the Judgements of God take place.

I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if

those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, **after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.** (*Manuscript Release*, Vol. 14, p. 3)

And once again we are told:

God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance. In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. He will say to the angels, **"No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience;** for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. **I will no longer interfere to prevent THE DESTROYER from doing his work."** (*Review & Herald*, September 17, 1901)

Pharaoh had his sowing time, and he also had his reaping time. He sowed resistance and obstinacy. He sowed the seed in the soil. **No new power was put into operation by God.** The seed was left to spring up; the man was permitted to act out his true character. **When the Lord sees unbelief in the heart against light and evidence, all he has to do is**

to let the human agent alone; for the seed put into the soil will bring forth seed after its kind. Many have been sowing the seed of unbelief, and if this seed is cultivated, it will produce a harvest that will not be so pleasant to reap as the seed is to sow. When Pharaoh refused to heed the messages and admonitions of God, and was not admonished by the first miracle that God worked to convince him, he was in a condition more easily to say, "I will," and "I will not." His independent resistance produced a harvest after its kind, and all the evidences that God gave to set his steps in the right path, only served to fasten him in unbelief and rebellion. He went on from one degree of resistance and wilful disobedience of God to another degree, just as the ungodly of all ages have done, and will do to the close of time, until he finally looked upon the dead face of his first-born. The character revealed by Pharaoh is similar to that of all the impenitent. **God destroys no man; but after a time the wicked are given up to the destruction they have wrought for themselves.** (*The Youth's Instructor*, November 30, 1893 par. 6)

No new power was introduced to destroy Egypt. Egypt was given up because of the wicked rebellion they had wrought for themselves. It is true that God worked the miracle to reveal the serpents in the beginning to show them that Satan would be allowed to use power to destroy, but God did not do this work of destruction on Egypt.

Dear brothers and sisters, in Egypt God commanded that only the first-born were to be left in the hand of the destroyer. In the time of the end He will sorrowfully command that all who are

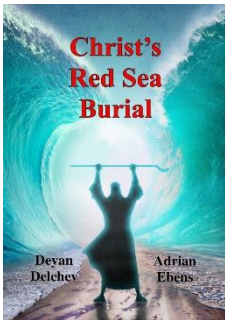
disobedient to the good news of the gospel to be left to the hand of the enemy. As Jesus wept over Jerusalem, so He will weep over our whole world that refused Him entrance.

As the Lord stood at the door of the faithful in Egypt because of the blood of the sacrificed lamb, so the Lord will stand again in defence of all those who have washed their robes in the blood of the true Lamb that flowed at Calvary.

May all who read these words be protected in the day of the great slaughter from THE DESTROYER.

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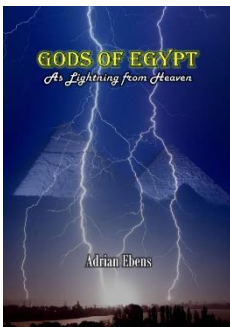
Christ's Red Sea Burial



The destruction of the Egyptian army is trumpeted as one of the clearest evidences that God is a destroyer. Even in the song of Moses we are told that God is a man of war that dashes his enemies to pieces. Exodus 15:3-6.

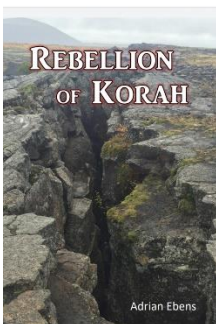
How can God be a man of war and at the same time have a Son who is the prince of peace? Can sweet and bitter water from the same fountain? Is God life and death mixed into one? Is His character like Yin and Yang?

Gods of Egypt as Lightning from Heaven



The Bible contains several instances of sentencing people to be stoned to death for their transgressions. Where did this practice come from? Did God introduce this idea to Moses or did it come from some other source. Is it possible that the judgments that fell upon Israel related to their ideas of judgment rather than from God Himself? Did the sin of the golden calf change anything in the relationship between God and Israel? Is it important to know? To him that hath ears let him hear.

Rebellion of Korah



Who sent Korah, Dathan and Abiram alive down into the pit?

At first glance Ellen White seems to suggest it was directly God saying that the people “dared to attribute His judgments to Satan.” (PP, p. 405). But then in *Testimonies for the Church* we read: “In the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram we have a lesson of warning lest we follow their example ... ‘Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer [1 Corinthians 10:9-10].’ (Vol. 3, p. 353). How do we harmonise these statements?

The Destroyer

Who was **the destroyer** of the first born of Egypt?

*For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer **THE DESTROYER** to come in unto your houses to smite you. (Exodus 12:23)*

Many believe that it was God who killed them all. If God will not suffer **the Destroyer** to come into the Israelite houses, does this mean He is restraining Himself? Does that make sense? If Christ destroyed the first born in Egypt, does that mean those who are crucified with Christ and who believe that Christ is in them have **a destroyer** abiding in them?

*For the Son of man is **not come to destroy** men's lives, but to save them. (Luke 9:56)*

The evidence shows clearly that **Satan is the Destroyer** and it is God who restrains him from doing his evil work.

Thus the archfiend clothes with his own attributes the Creator and Benefactor of mankind. Cruelty is satanic. God is love; and all that He created was pure, holy, and lovely, until sin was brought in by the first great rebel. **Satan himself is the enemy who tempts man to sin, and then destroys him if he can**; and when he has made sure of his victim, then he exults in the ruin he has wrought. If permitted, he would sweep the entire race into his net. Were it not for the interposition of divine power, not one son or daughter of Adam would escape. (*Great Controversy*, p. 534.2)