

Lesson #6

The Defeat of the Devil and the Demonic

The key to victory in spiritual warfare is in knowing both *what Jesus Christ has done to Satan and what He has done to you*. Christians too often live in fear of what they think the devil might do, but can't, and in ignorance of what they themselves can do, but don't. Defeat is thus the result of failing to reckon with and act upon *the devil's dethronement and the believer's enthronement*.

N.B. A word of encouragement regarding the destiny of the devil and his demons: Mt. 8:28-29; 25:41; 2 Pt. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:7-10.

According to 1 John 3:8, "***the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.***" The word "destroy" = lit., to loose, to unbind, to unravel, to dissolve. Hence, Satan's works are conceived as chains that bind us, which Jesus now breaks. His works have a coherence, an inter-connectedness, being somehow intertwined, as if a tapestry of sorts. Jesus came to undo and dissolve the enemy's efforts. The coming of Jesus "was concerned with unpicking the net of evil in which the devil has always attempted to trap human beings" (Smalley, 170).

What are Satan's "works"?

- *Morally*, he entices to sin.
- *Physically*, he inflicts disease (and death).
- *Intellectually*, he seduces into error.
- *Socially*, he provokes hatred and chaos.
- *Politically and Economically*, he produces injustice and oppression.
- *Spiritually*, he blinds the minds of unbelievers lest they believe the gospel.

How did Jesus "destroy" the works of the devil?

1. ***His Life and Ministry***

a. *the Temptation* (Mt. 4:1-11)

It is important to note that whereas the temptation in the desert marks an important victory for Jesus (and us), it is merely the first battle in a continuous campaign of spiritual conflict. Two things confirm this: (1) Jesus issues the command, "Be gone, Satan!" (Mt. 4:10), yet is forced to issue the same command yet again when Peter becomes his unwitting tool: "Get behind me, Satan!" (Mt. 16:23). The Greek verb used in Mt. 16:23 is the same as that used in Mt. 4:10 (*hupage*)! Evidently, even when Jesus commanded Satan to depart, it wasn't necessarily a once-for-all event that never needed to be repeated. (2) According to Luke 4:13, after Jesus issued this command, Satan "departed from Him *until an opportune time.*"

b. *Deliverance* (Mt. 12:22-29)

vv. 25-26 - A kingdom that develops internal strife self-destructs; whereas there is no harmony, trust, or loyalty in the kingdom of darkness, Satan will not tolerate disobedience or division.

vv. 28-29 (Lk. 11:21-22) - Satan is the "strong man"; his "palace/home" is this present evil age; his "goods/property" are the men and women under his influence. With the coming of Jesus the kingdom of God has arrived and has invaded the kingdom of darkness. The devil's power has been broken and his captives set free.

- Observe that Jesus first "ties up" or "binds" the strong man before he "plunders" his house. As Page notes, "the analogy of tying up / overpowering the strong man naturally suggests that the exorcisms were preceded by a decisive victory over Satan. A number of scholars have found just such a victory in the temptation of Jesus in the desert. This first encounter that Jesus had with Satan came at a critical juncture in Jesus' life (after his messianic investiture at his baptism and prior to his public ministry), and Jesus emerged from the contest as the victor. Others, finding this connection to be overly subtle, suggest that the exorcisms themselves constitute the occasion of Satan's defeat" (106-07). An allusion to the temptation is probably in view. What is important is that because of Christ's victory in the desert temptation Satan cannot hinder Jesus from bringing the blessings of the kingdom (deliverance, freedom, forgiveness) to those formerly under his power.
- If in fact the "binding" (v. 29) of the devil is a direct reference to the victory Jesus achieved during his temptation in the desert, what impact does this have on the contemporary approach to spiritual warfare in which believers "bind" Satan? Is it not the case that he is already bound and that our task is to engage in the "plundering" of his house?
- Note also that although Jesus "bound" Satan, the latter is still active. In other words, to "bind" the devil is not so absolute as to restrict all his activity. As is clear from Mt. 16 and elsewhere, Satan, though in some sense "bound," continues to operate.

2. *His Death*

- a. The principal goal of Satan is to thwart the principal goal of God. God's principal goal is to glorify himself. Insofar as the cross of Christ glorified God, it defeated Satan. How did the cross glorify the Father?

We must remember that sin belittles God's glory. This has special relevance in the centuries preceding the cross during which God "passed over" sin, giving the appearance that His glory was of little worth. See esp. Rom. 3:23-26; John 12:27-28 (Jn. 13:31; 17:1-4). Piper explains:

"Therefore, all his pain and shame and humiliation and dishonor served to magnify the Father's glory, because they showed how infinitely valuable God's glory is, that such a loss should be suffered to demonstrate its worth. When we look at the wracking pain and death of the perfectly innocent and infinitely worthy Son of God on the cross, and hear that he endured it all so that the glory of his Father, desecrated by sinners, might be restored, then we know that God has not denied the value of his own glory; he has not been untrue to himself; he has not ceased to uphold his honor and display his glory; he is just --- and the justifier of the ungodly" (*Pleasures of God*, 169).

In other words, "the depth of the Son's suffering was the measure of his love for the Father's glory" (176). Thus, when Jesus died as God's judgment against sin, against that which belittles God's glory, Satan's principal goal was thwarted. Satan had come to vitiate God's glory. Jesus has come to vindicate it.

In this regard, we also take note of Jesus' statement in John 16:11 that "the ruler of this world *has been judged*," a proleptic reference to the impact of the cross on Satan. The verb "judged" (*krino*) is in the perfect tense, "indicating an action that, from the readers' standpoint, is past but has ongoing results. The verdict on Satan is in. He has been found guilty and is now awaiting the execution of his sentence" (Page, 130).

Note again, however, that although Satan has been judged, his influence does not come to an end. Later in the upper room discourse Jesus speaks of the continuing assault that comes from the enemy (Jn. 17:15).

b. A secondary goal of Satan is to keep men and women in their sin, under its penalty, held in bondage to its power, suffering mental and emotional defeat from its guilty accusations. Insofar as Christ's death secured redemption from sin and forgiveness of its guilt, Satan has suffered defeat.

Especially instructive on this point is Colossians 2:13-15.

- (1) he has made us spiritually alive (v. 13a)
- (2) he has forgiven us our sins (vv. 13b-14)
 - (a) he did it by canceling the certificate of debt (v. 14a)
 - (b) he did it by nailing it to the cross (v. 14b)
- (3) he has disarmed the demonic and triumphed over them (v. 15)

The word "*certificate of debt*" (v. 14) was used in the ancient world of an IOU, i.e., a signed acknowledgement of indebtedness. All humanity is indebted to God, i.e., all *owe* God absolute obedience. This signed spiritual obligation was "against us" (v. 14) and "hostile" to us (v. 14) because we had willingly and persistently refused and failed to discharge its demands. But God through Christ Jesus has "canceled" the debt! Lit., he has "blotted out" or "erased" the debt. Cf. Isa. 43:25.

He has taken the certificate out of the way by nailing it to the cross (v. 14), either a reference to the ancient practice of affixing to the cross an inscription of the crimes for which the person was being executed, or simply a way of saying that God nailed the condemning power of the law to the cross by imputing our guilt to his son.

It was specifically the work of the *cross* by which victory over the demonic ("rulers and authorities"; cf. Eph. 1:20-21; 3:10; 6:10ff.; Rom. 8:38) was achieved. He "triumphed over them through **IT**" (v. 15; i.e., through the cross). The tree that to every eye appeared to be the cause of his demise became the tool of his triumph. In a marvelous twist of divine irony, the instrument of disgrace and death by which the devil thought he had gained victory became the weapon of his own destruction.

The passage clearly implies that some connection exists between the demonic hosts and the certificate of debt that is against us, such that the cancellation of the latter defeats the former. What is the nature of this connection. Page answers:

"Perhaps, the powers exercised their influence over humanity through legal regulations, that is, by promoting the view that the way to please God is to conform to a set of religious and ethical rules. If this is the case, the disarming of the powers could relate to their losing their power to enslave people to a life of constant striving to reach perfection by following prescribed religious rituals and a strict code of conduct. Another possibility is that the powers were seen as sharing Satan's role as accuser (see Job 1:9-11; Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10). On this view, Christ's death on the cross deprived the powers of their ability to demand a guilty verdict and its accompanying penalty for humanity. Since forgiveness is prominent in the immediate context, the latter explanation is preferable" (253).

In any case, the impact of the cross on the demonic is explicit:

- He "disarmed" the demonic hosts - see Col. 3:9 where the same verb is used by Paul when he urges believers to "lay aside" or to "strip themselves" of sin as if it were a filthy garment. In his crucifixion Jesus stripped the forces of evil from himself as one would an old and soiled garment.

- He "made a public display" of the demonic, a word used only here in the NT which seems to mean "exposure to shame." I.e., Jesus humiliated the demonic in his death!
- Finally, he "triumphed" over them. This word is found elsewhere only in 2 Cor. 2:14 and means "to lead as a conquered enemy in a victory parade."

c. As long as Satan can keep people in their sin, he can torment them with the fear of death, for death is sin's penalty. In this regard, see Hebrews 2:14-15. In what sense did Satan have the "power of death"? (1) It was Satan who persuaded Adam and Eve to abandon life in the garden, i.e., he was responsible for the introduction of death into the world. (2) Also, within the limits placed on him by God, he has power or authority to inflict death. (3) Finally, he possesses the ability to instill the fear of death in the hearts of men, terrorizing them with the prospect of what it would bring. Such fear is here conceived not as driving men to Christ but as enslaving them in sinful behavior.

Note: the word translated "destroy" (*katargeo*) in some versions is better translated as "render powerless" or "reduce to impotence" or "make ineffective." It does not mean to annihilate. "What the verse suggests is that Satan's power was broken as a result of what happened on the cross so that those who had previously been enslaved could be liberated" (Page, 204).

See also 1 Cor. 15:50-57. In the death of Christ, Satan was defeated, for on the cross God's righteousness was vindicated, sin's penalty was endured, and the sting of death was removed.

3. *His Resurrection and Exaltation*

The resurrection was the Father's "Amen!" to the Son's "It is finished!" By raising Jesus from the dead and exalting him to the right hand of the majesty on high, God the Father ratified, confirmed, and openly proclaimed the sufficiency of the cross. See Rom. 5:8-11; 1 Cor. 15:16-17; Eph. 1:18-23; Col. 2:10; 1 Pt. 3:22; Rev. 1:17-18.

Conclusion:

"... He [God the Father] seated Him [God the Son] at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things [i.e., 'all rule and authority and power and dominion', v. 21] in subjection under His feet" (Eph. 1:20b-22a). . . . "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

"and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority" (Col. 2:10).

"... Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him" (1 Pt. 3:22).

Addendum: Revelation 12:11 and the Defeat of the Devil

Regardless of the time of this event, whether past or future, the principles are always valid and relevant.

(1) **First, what does it mean to "overcome" the Devil?**

- It does not mean we destroy him (not until Rev. 20). In fact, note well that the victory of these believers only serves to intensify the wrath of Satan directed against the earth (v. 12)!

- It does not mean we put a permanent end to his attack of us (cf. Jesus after temptation).
- It does not mean Satan can't kill you (through persecution; cf. Rev. 2:10; 6:9-11).

It *does* mean . . .

- *We find the strength to say No to sin*
- *We hold firm in our faith in Jesus*

Satan knows he can gain a major strategic advantage over us if he can sow the seeds of doubt in our minds concerning our relationship with God.

In every instance of serious and sustained demonic attack that I have encountered, the individual was plagued with doubt concerning his/her salvation.

There is nothing Satan can do to alter or undermine the fact that we are saved. Not "angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). But, what he can do is erode our assurance and confidence that we are saved. Our salvation, our standing with God, does not fluctuate or diminish with our success or failure in spiritual battles. But Satan is determined to convince us that it does.

- *We are effective in setting free his captives*

(2) **Second, how did they (we) overcome him?**

(1) *through the blood of the Lamb*

- Rom. 8 – we appeal to the cross when Satan or others accuse us
- We proclaim Col. 2 and Christ's triumph
- We assert the truth of the cross
- It was the cross/resurrection of Jesus that secured for us the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
- I believe "the blood of the Lamb" is simply a way of referring to Jesus in his capacity as Lord and Savior, the one who triumphed over sin and death.

(2) *through the word of our testimony*

This is the **preaching of the gospel!** The *testimony* is our verbal, visual making known of the truth of the gospel! There is no more effective weapon in spiritual warfare than the simple, straightforward proclamation of the gospel!

Praise and worship

The power to repel the enemy, the authority to overcome, is *not* to be found in the physical elements of music per se. I.e., *volume, melody, rhythm* have no inherent spiritual power. Power to repel and overcome the enemy resides in the *truth* of what is sung or played and the *heart* of the singer/player. Why did the evil spirit leave Saul whenever David played his harp (*1 Sam. 16:16-23*)? Was it merely the fact that *music* was played, or was it the fact that it was *David* who played it? See especially **v. 18**.

The devil pays no attention to decibels or sweat or physical gestures. But he is compelled to submit to the proclamation of truth and the presence of the Spirit and the authenticity and intensity

of heart devotion to Jesus. Intimacy in worship (God's love and ours), adoration, declaration of God's power, grace, kindness, justice, etc., affirmation of our commitment, etc. do more to repel the enemy than anything. *That is warfare worship.* Nothing will do more to drive away demons than the intensity of intimacy with Jesus!

It may well be that increased volume and demonstrative physical activity are the *fruit* of the heart's devotion, but it is the devotion, not the demonstration, that drives the enemy from our midst.

(3) *through not loving our lives even unto death*

What is being described in this little phrase is a *value judgment*, a *prioritizing that affected every aspect of their lives*. Point: **they loved Jesus more than their earthly welfare, more than earthly pleasures, more than earthly convenience, more than peace, prosperity, comfort, etc.**

Acts 20:24 . . .

Perseverance. **Hebrews 10:34** ("For you . . . accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one"). *They had refused to let anything in life get a grip on their hearts in such a way that it might diminish their devotion to Jesus. "Jesus is more valuable to us than anything life can offer. Jesus is greater treasure than life itself. We will gladly die before we renounce him!"*

Don't you see that Satan has absolutely no chance of winning when he confronts a heart like that! Simple, unqualified, unconditional, devotion to Jesus!

How does Satan win? When we love our lives more than we love God. When we allow our hearts to be captured by earthly comfort and find that we would do anything and everything to procure more, preserve what we have, promote it, make it comfortable, insulate it, etc. Too many of us love our lives illegitimately; there is a good and legal love of life (not talking about that; celebrate life, enjoy it, etc.). This is an over-protective concern for personal comfort and convenience and peace and prosperity and the resultant energy and life-style designed to perpetuate it. **Satan wins whenever we treasure anything more than Jesus.**

So, how does this perspective on life overcome the enemy? When you prioritize your life so that nothing means more to you than Jesus, you deprive Satan of any legal right to your heart or mind; you undermine and short circuit his power to influence your soul. How? If this (Rev. 12:11) is your life, what can he possibly latch hold of? What is there in your life to which he can affix himself? To what can he appeal in your soul that would give him a power base from which to operate?

John 14:30 – "He (Satan) has nothing in me." Because of Jesus' obedience to the Father, commitment and devotion of heart, Satan had nothing on which he could launch a successful assault.