

# LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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## YOUR ADVERSARY

1Peter 5:8

These are ominous words and suggest at once our privilege and our warfare. We fight not against flesh and blood, not with human beings, but against principalities, powers, and wicked spirits ruling and reigning in the hearts of ungodly men Eph. 6:12. It has become fashionable in many circles to deny the reality of Satan. Some who stand in pulpits either deny his existence or declare that belief in him has no real bearing on our lives. To reject the reality of Satan is to reject the reality of hell. If there is nothing to be saved from, what is the sense of a doctrine of salvation? One who denies the devil is stripped of all motivation toward righteousness and all restraint against evil. The evil one is real. He is an intelligent, crafty, diligent, and powerful personality.

### I. From Whence Cometh the Devil?

1. He apparently was a spirit being, (a created being), who was lifted up with pride 1Tim. 3:6 "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

2. He was cast out of heaven and became the leader of all fallen angels who were also in rebellion against God 2Peter 2:4 "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Jude 6 "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of that great day."

### II. The Many Faces of Satan.

Satan has many faces. He is the ultimate hypocrite. His conversations give us great insight into his personality:

With Eve---Gen.2:5 "for God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." He deceived Eve by tempting her to disobey the voice of God. His intent was to create a rift between Eve and God.

With Christ---Mt.4:1-11 In these verses we see that once again Satan is trying to get Jesus to betray what is right and do the very thing that is wrong.

With God---Job 1:6-7 "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, from where do you come" so Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and for on the earth and from walking back and forth on it." This verse implies that there were special times when the "sons of God" or angelic or heavenly beings presented themselves before Jehovah. Satan appeared (an apostate son), on this occasion. The answer he gave when asked "from whence he came" indicates he was a detached spirit, on his own, responsible to no one.

a. Satan Is An Adversary: (an opponent or foe)

You may not spend much time thinking about the Devil, but you can be sure that he "thinks about you."

He is at war with you. He is your enemy. He affirmed that he was "going up and down in the earth..." From this we can sense his nearness to us. God asked "have you considered my servant Job?" He had. He is a diligent personal worker. He knew Job by name, and had already examined him fully and formed his conclusions, about him. He works chiefly among the righteous. Why? Because the wicked already belong to him. A Lion chases only the prey he does not have. Job was a righteous man, and even though Satan controlled most of the world, he wanted Job.

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" Luke 22:31. He was after Peter.

b. Satan, The False Accuser.

Slandering and falsely accusing good men originated with the Devil. When God asked if he had considered Job, Satan replied with an accusation. "Doth Job serve you for naught?" In other words Job serves you because you are good to him. "Put forth your hand and touch all that he hath and he will curse you to your face" Job. 1:9-11. God granted the permission: "Behold all that he hath is in thy power" Job. 1:12. Why would God allow this? To allow Job to prove his faith and fidelity. (Note: Job was off limits. God limited Satan's power. He could only act within the scope of God's permission to test Job.)

In Rev. 12:10 Satan is pictured as "the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night." (i.e. persued, afflicted, and tempted.) Evil beings are determined to find evil in others.

c. Satan, The Wrecker.

The Devil specializes in tearing down every good thing. He was trying to do this on Job---i.e. wreck a faithful life through agonizing hardships. He continues to break hearts, homes, lives, and churches. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" Zech. 3:1. Wherever the Lord's servants are, the Adversary's agents are near, ready to resist and, if possible, wreck every good work---either by persecution or false doctrines, or by strife and confusion.

d. Satan The Deceiver.

The world's great deceiver can change color quicker than a chameleon and appear to be anything which suits his purpose. He makes sin appear appealing. He beguiled Eve through craftiness. By holding before her the beautiful, desirable and enticing: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof" Gen. 3:6. She saw the bait, but not the hook. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. 2Cor. 11:13-14 "For

such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light." As such he operates in the field of religion, teaching his corrupt doctrines, operating in churches and blinding the minds of men, even stealing the word of God from their hearts.

One of the most deceptive aspects of Satan's personality is his ability to work through people. He used the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, Job's wife and his friends. At no time did Job realize the part the great deceiver was playing in his life. He was truly an unseen adversary. How does Satan do this? Anytime we help promote one of the goals of the Devil, whether we hinder good or promote and encourage evil, we are being used by Satan. (He used Judas, he used Peter.) And he will use you, if you let him.

#### e. Satan, The Tempter.

The word tempt means to entice, to try to lure one into. Satan is called the tempter in 1 Thess. 3:5. "...and lest by some means the tempter had tempted you." As the father of all sin, his goal is to lure everyone into the evil of which he himself is guilty. Every weapon he had was used against Job. As the story opens, we learn that Job had already withstood the temptations of prosperity. Then the tempter tested him with adversity.

Some can faithfully endure adversity, only to turn away from God in prosperity, and the children of Israel did, while others turn away from God in adversity. Satan is persistent. When one method failed on Job, he immediately tried something else. So it was with Christ. After his baptism, the Wicked one appeared and offered his devilish appeals, "and when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." Lk. 4:13. Note: "for a season" He always returns.

The three avenues of Satan's operation:

1. In craftiness, as a serpent, he seeks to beguile the unwary as he did Eve. (He does so through an appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life).
2. Satan comes in the garb of false religion, leading people away from the faith in Christ by fashioning himself into an angel of light and using his ministers, "who fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness.
3. Satan seeks to destroy by force, whether political oppression, physical suffering from disease, or natural calamities of which he may be the instigator. (A roaring lion)

#### III. Stronger Than Satan.

The tempter roams the earth. He rules most of the world, being called the "prince of this world" and the "god of this world." The throngs which rally behind him today are popular, and in many cases well-organized, and well financed. It may seem unfair that he and all his forces should be unleashed upon one lone man such as Job---or on each of us---and that each person has the problem of being stronger than Satan. Can man succeed? Of course he can, in fact he must. Being unable to do so will result in one sharing the same destiny of the Devil Mt. 25:41.

#### IV. The Limitations of His Power.

We are not merely as helpless putty in Satan's hands.

### He is limited by God

God grants Satan freedom within limitations. He could only test Job so far. We are assured that we will not be tempted above that which we are able to bear. 1Cor. 10:13.

### He is limited by Christ

Who triumphed over him completely. He not only refused every temptation Heb. 4:15 "...but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." He also broke the power of Satan by triumphing over death Heb. 2:14 "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

### He is limited by man.

Though the Devil may bring hardships upon us, he can do nothing within us, except that which we permit him to do. James 4:7 "...Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

## V. The Binding and Loosing of Satan.

Rev.20:1-3 and 7-10

Satan is bound by Christ: There are three references to the binding of Satan:

1. Jesus bound the strong man and spoiled his house. Mt.12:28-29 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?"
2. Jesus bound Satan in the victory over death. Heb. 2:14-15 "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."
3. The reference in Rev. 20 to the binding of Satan refers to a time subsequent to the establishment of the church and the persecution suffered at the hands of the beast and false prophet.

Satan failed to abolish the church from the earth by means of the beast (Roman Empire) and the false prophet (pagan emperor worship.)

These three references reveal that Satan is bound by Christ in the sense that he has:

1. No power to possess the saints with demons
2. No power to accuse the redeemed to be worthy of the second death and,
3. No power to elevate the beast (world kingdoms) to deceive the nations and unite them to wage war against God and his people. He cannot destroy the Church.

## V. 7 "Loosed out of his prison"

Satan will make a last great effort before the end of time and final judgment

Details are brief, and we must be careful not to read into the text anything not intended by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps what is meant here is a period of great wickedness just before the second coming of Christ, comparable to the days of Noah before the flood.

During this effort Satan will test the faith of the saints, by using his allies that represent every form of evil known to man, in an attempt to get them to renounce their faith and yield to sin. It was through the faithfulness of the saints that Satan is bound, Thus it may well be that when a spirit of loyal devotion to the principles and cause of Christ no longer distinguish God's people, the restraining power is gone.---And Satan is again loosed. From verse 8 we see that Satan no longer relies on one power i.e. imperial Rome, but gathers his forces from all sources i.e. nations in all quarters of the earth. This is no physical conflict but a moral and spiritual one. God through Ezekiel (38) explains who Gog and Magog are: i.e. all heathen enemies who would come against Israel and who would be defeated and destroyed by His hand. Hence near the end of time Satan will marshal the forces of evil from throughout the earth in an attempt to destroy the church. The church will be under siege from the forces of evil such as secularism, materialism, atheism, astrology, false religion, fleshly lusts, drug cults, paganistic advocates, who tolerate every immorality secular humanism can conceive, from abortion and, Homo-sexual marriages to the abolition of the faith that advocates trust in God. Humanism has become the moral ethic of the day. The Humanist Manifesto II states: "Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful." In the field of Ethics it says "We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stem from human need and interest." The length of the effort lasts for "a little season" v. 3 It does not succeed. Verse 10 tells us that it ends in failure, with Satan being cast into the "Lake of fire." Once this is accomplished there is no enemy left to oppress the church. Total victory will be hers.