

DISCOVERY SERIES

Know the Enemy

Revealing Truths About Satan



GREG DUTCHER



introduction

Know Your Enemy

Winning takes strategy. Strategy requires knowing your opponent. So how do you fight an enemy when you don't know who they are? Or worse, when you think the enemy is someone they are not? Books and movies have filled our minds with a devil who is out to get us and powerful enough that nothing can stop him. But is Hollywood right?

The following pages, excerpted from Greg Dutcher's book *Living Free in Enemy Territory*:

Christ's Triumph Over Satan, present a biblical picture of Satan that counteracts the glamorized version of our spiritual enemy. Pastor Dutcher uses the light of Scripture to dispel the fog that has covered many of our conceptions about who Satan is and what he can do.

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Excerpted from *Living Free in Enemy Territory: Christ's Triumph Over Satan* by Greg Dutcher.

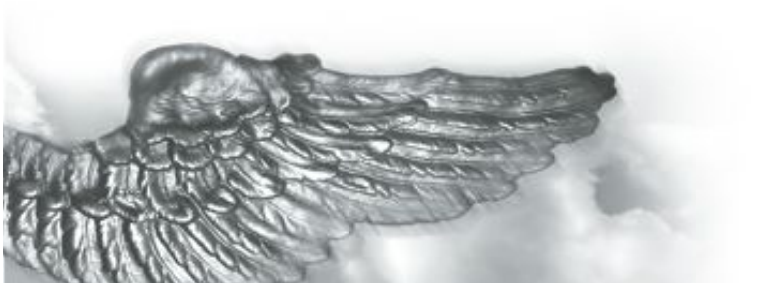
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one

Dispelling Two Myths About Satan

As a pastor I have had many sincere Christians share their concerns about Satan and his activities with me. The concerns these people have are very real. But sometimes I wonder if they are influenced more by Hollywood's version of the Devil than by what Scripture says about him.

Hollywood's Satan scares us to death. But why? Why are we so frightened of this special-effects creature, with its scaly body, red glowing eyes, and sharp horns? If we are honest it's probably because an entity who can make the lights go out, drop the room temperature to arctic levels, and talk in a deep and creepy voice has a lot of

power to raise the goose bumps on our flesh. The ending of the movie *Rosemary's Baby* was unnerving because we feared that we would glimpse the baby—the child of Satan. As the cultic followers on the screen were fawning over the demon child, those in the audience were on the edge of their seats, wanting to see but afraid to look.



And therein lies a great problem: we can become obsessed with Satan's physicality. What does he look like? Where does he set up shop? What will I do if he holes up in my daughter's doll collection? Such questions spark great ideas for horror writers, filmmakers, and special effects experts, but they don't help us think biblically about Satan and his minions.

If we keep living under the delusion that he is the Creature from the Black Lagoon, then we will inevitably fall prey to a second myth.

The fifteen-year-old, cable-movie-addicted version of myself was distraught over something that seemed fundamentally unfair. It seemed that Satan and his demons were not only powerful, but free to move about wherever and whenever they wanted. In movie after movie, a normal American family moved into the one house that the Devil had arbitrarily chosen as his summer vacation home. And once he did, no amount of holy water or exorcisms could stop him from destroying the house, the people living in it (even the faithful family dog), and anyone or anything that tried

We can become obsessed with Satan's physicality. What does he look like? Where does he set up shop?

to stand in his way. If Satan wanted to paint a bull's-eye on your back, too bad for you! Sometimes popular Christian teaching presents Satan with this kind of unstoppable power and authority. The repercussions of such a portrayal are troubling.

When I started to wonder about a possible spiritual realm where Satan had this kind of free reign, I scared myself into virtual paralysis. What recourse would a teenager have if satanic forces made him a target? It seems that many Christians, even mature Christians, think about Satan in the same way.

I recently asked a group of twenty-somethings two questions:

- 1) Can Satan go wherever he wants to?
- 2) Can Satan make your life a living hell if wants to?

Ask yourself these same two questions. If you answered yes to either of them (as the twenty-somethings did to both), then I have news for you. The bad news is that you've been duped into believing the myth that Satan is all-powerful and omnipresent. The good news is that you can get *unduped!*

Satan Is Not Beastly, But Beautiful

While the Bible is sparse on any physical description of Satan, it gives us enough clues that we can be certain he is not some hideous creature who would make our skin crawl. When the apostle Paul warned the church at Corinth about the Devil's activity, he urged them to be on the lookout for beauty, not beastliness.

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for *even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light*" (2 COR. 11:13-14, italics added).



Some commentators use this passage to suggest that Satan is hideous in appearance, but Paul does not seem to be suggesting that here. He is contrasting the outward appearance of false teachers with their inward motivations: outwardly they are pleasant, but inwardly their motives are sinister. So Paul is not suggesting that Satan is actually physically ugly behind his façade. He is merely demonstrating that Satan has sinister motives, but that his outward manifestations can be quite beautiful.

Physical appearance is never really the issue; Satan is

Certain Old Testament passages may or may not chronicle **Satan's fall from heaven**. The two main passages are Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:15-17. Both passages describe the fall of a ruler whose pride swelled to the point of rebellion—Isaiah refers to the king of Babylon and Ezekiel refers to the king of Tyre.

an angel—an incorporeal being. That should not surprise us in light of the Devil's origin.

Based on certain New Testament passages, it is reasonable to conclude that there was some sort of angelic rebellion in ages past and that Satan was an angel who rebelled against God and was expelled from His presence.

“God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast

***Satan has sinister motives,
but his outward manifestations
can be quite beautiful.***

them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 PETER 2:4 NKJV).

“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (JUDE 1:6 NKJV).

These passages recount a heavenly mutiny. A number of angels banded together in opposition against God, and God responded by banning them from heaven and marking them for eternal judgment. Yet neither of these passages mentions Satan.

So how do we know he should be counted in their number? Jesus answers this question by giving us a glimpse of the original blueprint for hell, particularly for whom it was constructed.

*We don't want to make the mistake of assuming that **angels** are the cute and cuddly variety. Every time angels show up in Scripture, they have to say, "Don't be afraid!" Angels are an awesome sight—but they are not monsters.*

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (MATT. 25:41).

Notice the phrase "the devil and his angels." The relationship is that of a leader and his followers, a president and his cabinet, a general and his soldiers. Satan is the ringleader of a band of angelic malcontents. His essence is angelic, not bestial.

Satan Is Not All-Powerful

As much as Satan would love to be free to do whatever he pleases, to roam at will throughout the earth, the world is not his playground—at least not in the way he wants it to be. While Satan may have carte blanche in screenplays and novels, he has no such liberty in the real world.

The perfect example of the extent of Satan's "freedom" is found in the book of Job. There we learn that Satan desires to test Job, a righteous servant of God (JOB 1). That's all a modern filmmaker would need to make a horror flick. From that



point in the movie, Satan would plot his evil plans to ruin Job and his family in full computer-generated special effects glory. But the Bible has a scene that would ruin the producer's vision.

"And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that [Job] has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.' So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD" (JOB 1:12).

What? God puts limits on Satan's plans? He is not free to move about the world as he pleases? That's right! Satan is not only limited by God in what he can and cannot do, but Satan must also ask God's permission before he can do anything! In the New Testament, Jesus confirms this limit on Satan's freedom in a stern warning to the apostle Peter. Shortly before Jesus' death, He wants to prepare Peter for a coming test.

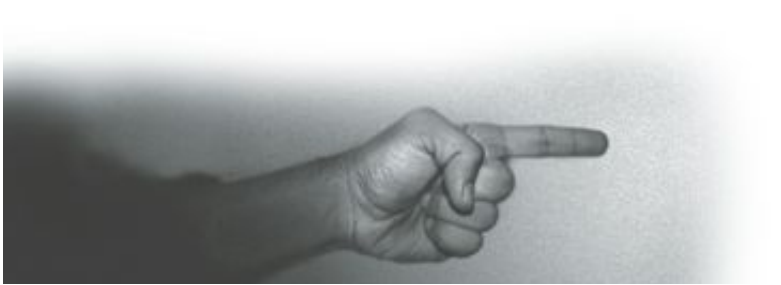
"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (LUKE 22:31-32).

***Satan is evil. He is powerful.
He seeks to do us great harm. But he is
definitely not free!***

Notice that Satan "demanded" to have Peter. He *demand*ed. But demand is not the same as *command*. People can demand all they want. A prisoner without the

possibility of parole can demand that he be released, but he has no control over his destiny—that belongs to the parole board. A toddler can demand ice cream, but only his mother is tall enough to pull it from the freezer. It is no different with Satan. Yes, he demands, but it is God who determines whether his request will be granted. This is why Martin Luther is alleged to have said, "The devil is God's devil."

Make no mistake: Satan is evil. He is powerful. He seeks to do us great harm. But he is definitely not free! Satan is a rebellious and cast-out angel with a chip on his shoulder. We know he disguises himself as an angel of light. But what is his true identity? What is he seeking to do? What is his end game?



two

The Gleeful Prosecutor

f Satan isn't the bogeyman under the bed, or the psychopathic doll bent on destruction, or any other malevolent force fresh out of a Stephen King novel, then just who is he?

Imagine you are in a crowded mall and a police officer calls you on your cell phone. "We've just gotten word that someone's taken out a contract on your life," he tells you. "There is a hit man in the food court watching you right now." Suddenly you are totally focused on the identity of that hit man. *Is he tall? Short? Bald? White? Black? Asian? Bearded? Fat? Thin? Is he on the other side of the court, or is he standing right next to me? Has he spotted me yet? Will*

he try to kill me here in the mall? Or will he lure me into a more secluded place?

When a person means to do you harm, understanding that person's identity, appearance, whereabouts, modus operandi, intentions, and skills are things you must know.



The apostle Paul wanted the Christians at Corinth to be on guard so that they "would not be outwitted by Satan; for [they] are not ignorant of his designs" (2 COR. 2:11). He also warned the Ephesians that no matter how many opposed their stance for Christ, their real enemies were not people but the sinister forces lurking behind them; they were not wrestling "against flesh and blood, but against . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (EPH. 6:12). And Peter urged those under his care to be on the lookout for Satan, who "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 PETER 5:8).

Putting these three passages together, we can draw a preliminary sketch of our ancient enemy. Though Hollywood has taken the idea well beyond Scripture's description, Satan is a powerful being who is scheming to outwit us, and he would like nothing better than to pounce on us and eat us for breakfast! In light of this we should do our best to know just who this enemy is.

A Helpful Clue From The Book Of Job

It may seem counterintuitive *not* to start at Genesis in our quest to understand the identity of Satan. However,

When a person means to do you harm, understanding that person's identity, appearance, whereabouts, modus operandi, intentions, and skills are things you must know.

the Serpent's abrupt presence in the garden of Eden can be better understood once we learn a little more about Satan's modus operandi. To do that, we return to the book of Job, where we are given an unusual opportunity to eavesdrop on a conversation between the God of the universe and the greatest villain in the universe.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?"

Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the

Some commentators suggest that the "sons of God" are Job's sons who are worshipping before the Lord. But I think a greater argument can be made that the "sons of God" are angels, and for sovereign purposes, God is allowing Satan to make an appearance in His heavenly court.

earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." (JOB 1:6–11)

This conversation centers on the legitimacy of Job's trust in God. Does Job love God for being God or simply for the good stuff God gives? Satan is convinced that Job only "loves" God because God is Job's own personal genie in the sky. If Satan can only have his way with Job for a few minutes, then Job's righteous veneer will vanish.



Here is where we begin to see the clear light of Scripture dispel the myths that have been cast around the person of Satan. The popular culture version of Satan wants to physically hurt us; usually he wants to kill us. But the biblical Satan has a much more ambitious goal than doing us bodily harm. That's child's play for him. Satan is pouring all of his energy into one grand outcome: the cursing of God. That's his end game. He makes this clear in Job 1:11:

"But stretch out your hand and touch all that [Job] has, and he will curse you to your face."

Satan's main ambition can be clearly seen in the book of Job. The book starts with Job consistently praying that his children do not "curse God in their hearts." Then Satan enters the story with a goal to see Job himself curse God to His face. This background makes the words of Job's wife in chapter 2 particularly ominous: "Curse God and die." Job's wife has unknowingly become a mouth-piece for Satan himself.

If Satan can lure us into a place where we curse God, then he has won.

Since most Christians would never think of actually shaking their fists in God's face and defying Him in such

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a dramatic manner, it is natural to ask what "cursing God" means. "Cursing God" appears to be one of many phrases that describe what Satan cherishes.

The apostle Paul summarizes Satan's aim as "[keeping us] from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 COR. 4:4). In its context, this verse is describing Satan's work among unbelievers, but it is certainly a safe application to say that he does not want Christians to think glorious thoughts of Christ.

Satan is working with all of his might to block our view of God's awesome beauty and glory, His righteousness and justice. When he comes in roaring like a lion, it is to drown out our praise and adoration of God.

*Looking at the story of Job and the teaching of Paul, we can say that one way of **cursing God** is not to recognize Him for who He is and give Him the proper glory.*

Adding Insult To Injury

It would be bad enough if Satan accomplished his vile mission of getting us to rob God of glory. But the Devil does not stop with inflicting that spiritual harm. His supreme delight appears to be in rubbing our faces in the very mess he has helped to create! In fact, the word *devil* means "the accuser." When the Bible shines God's searchlight on Satan, we do not find him hiding in a closet or under the bed, excitedly waiting to terrify clueless suburbanites who don't have the common sense to leave the house. No, we find him in a much more respectable place—the courtroom.

A perfectly groomed man in a three-piece suit with a black leather briefcase takes his place before the judge's bench and calmly points at the defendant (yes, that's you and me). In his hand is a legal pad with line after line of our infractions against God neatly spelled out. And he skillfully makes



his case. After all, he has been studying human behavior for millennia, and he has no trouble furnishing ample evidence of our guilt before God. If you think this scenario sounds too contrived, take a look at the vision the prophet Zechariah had of the high priest Joshua standing before the Lord.

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him” (ZECH. 3:1).

Satan’s ambitious goal was to discredit Joshua from standing in God’s presence. It is interesting to note what drew the Devil’s accusations in the first place: “Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments” (ZECH. 3:3). In ancient Israel, the high priest had the unique job of standing before God as the people’s representative. If his “clothes” were dirty, then, by default, so were the people’s clothes; and thus, everyone was doomed. The

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robes of the high priest were to be spotless, representing the kind of hearts his people were to have. But like all mankind, Joshua is “filthy”—a true sinner. And who is right next to him? Satan—all dressed up for his closing argument.

The phrase “**day and night**” is used to describe people involved in their greatest passions and commitments.

This is Satan doing what he does best. In fact, when the book of Revelation celebrates his eventual downfall, our enemy is depicted in his role as a prosecuting attorney: “the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God” (REV. 12:10).

Satan’s day and night passion is to accuse the very people he has tempted to sin in the first place! Pouring salt in the wound he has ripped open, pressing down on the gash he has inflicted, the Devil delights in adding insult to injury. And oh, how those accusations sting!

In the movie *The Green Mile*, gentle giant John Coffey, who many think is intended to be a Christlike figure, describes the continual pain of living in a fallen world. “There’s lotsa people here that hate me, lots. I can feel it. It’s like bees stingin’ me.” This is a picture of what it feels like to be under Satan’s continual accusations. He is a vile enemy, but we cannot deny the skill and passion he brings to his work.



Who Are We Up Against?

One of the movies that my brother and I watched late at night when we were kids was *Terminator*, in which

a futuristic robot is bent on accomplishing his mission to kill Sarah Connor, the mother of a yet-to-be-born child who will one day lead the resistance against the evil robots. But a young hero named Kyle Reese travels back in time to tell Sarah that she is in danger from this killing machine. "Listen, and understand," he says. "That terminator is out there. It can't be bargained with. It can't be reasoned with. It doesn't feel pity, or remorse, or fear. And it absolutely will not stop, ever!"

Satan is out there. He can't be bargained with. He can't be reasoned with. He is pitiless and always laser-focused on his twofold mission: 1) To lure us into a place where

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we turn against God, and then 2) To accuse us of our guilt for the very rebellion he's helped engineer. For the Christian, no enemy could be more serious.

But how can any of us frail humans stand up against such an adversary? In the sobering words of writer R. Kent Hughes: "Satan has had multiple millennia to study and master the human disciplines, and when it comes to human subversion, he is the ultimate manipulator."

No mere human is a match for such an opponent. That realization can lead us to despair—or, it can lead us to

the place it led Martin Luther when he penned his most famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress":

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing,
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God's own choosing.



three

The Devil's Comeuppance

Comeuppance. Since childhood this has been one of my favorite words. *Payback, justice, moment of truth*—they all have their place. But none stand out to me like comeuppance. I have even passed on this word to my kids, and it is now guaranteed that whenever we watch some epic Disney movie, one of them will excitedly ask, “Dad, when do you think they’ll get their comeuppance?”

In the ongoing battle between good and evil—whether it’s on film, in fairy tales, or in thrillers—the evil character is so deplorable, so “punishable,” that it seems that the

very reason for his presence in the story is to set up a great comeuppance moment. Naturally, then, in a book on Satan, we would ask, "When does the Devil get his comeuppance?"

Of course a logical guess would be at the end of the story. And there is a comeuppance moment found there. "And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur . . . tormented day and night forever and ever" (REV. 20:10).

What a fitting end for the great adversary of God. The Serpent that slithered through human history for one grand purpose—to keep people out of God's presence—finally will be contained in an inescapable prison forever. Never again will he tempt, afflict, or accuse God's people. Satan will be carried out to the eternal landfill and dumped there. In light of this "end of the story," would it surprise you, then, that Jesus says the Devil's true comeuppance moment came thousands of years earlier?



Does Satan Actually Run The World?

In John's gospel, Satan is called "the ruler of this world" (JOHN 12:31). Such a powerful title raises an alarming question. Does Satan run the show? Is this *his* world? The thought is troubling on a number of levels. If the Devil is in charge, then how can we ever feel safe in this world? More importantly, what does this say about God's

authority and power? When we sing “This Is My Father’s World,” are we wrong?

Thankfully the Bible does not leave us in the dark on such questions. While it is true that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 JOHN 5:19), the phrase “the whole world” has a unique meaning here. John tells us that all that is in the world—“the

The Serpent that slithered through human history for one grand purpose—to keep people out of God’s presence—finally will be contained in an inescapable prison forever.

desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life [in possessions]—is not from the Father but is from the world” (1 JOHN 2:16). Thus, pride, evil desires, and base lusts compose the world over which the Devil presides. That is why in the verse just before this description we are commanded, “Do not love the world” (1 JOHN 2:15).

The world that Satan runs is not a reference to plants,

*“World” is a word used in several different ways in Scripture. It can refer to the **material creation** of the earth, the **people** that inhabit that earth, or the **governing systems**—political and ideological—that people live by and in.*

people, or places. "Viewed as a people, the world must be loved," writes John Stott. "Viewed as an evil system, organized under the dominion of Satan not of God, it is not to be loved."¹ There is a kind of environment that exists in the world that is similar to air. We live and breathe in a thoroughly anti-God atmosphere that Satan enjoys managing.

But how did God's wicked adversary come into such a position of power?

Isaiah offers an answer to this question, shedding light on how the world that Satan rules came into being.

"The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed the laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.
Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt." (ISA. 24:5-6)

Because mankind has blatantly defied God's law, God himself ordained that "the creation was subjected to futility" (ROM. 8:20). In other words, the evil world we inhabit is a world of our own making, and God is allowing Satan to rule it for a temporary period.

This is a profound truth and it is crucial that we understand it: Any power the Devil has is only because God gives it to him for a season. But one day this usurper's power will be taken away.



The Hour Has Come

Millennia before the day Satan's comeuppance is carried out, whenever that day will be (which only God knows), Jesus made a cosmic announcement: Satan is already finished.

"Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out" (JOHN 12:31).

*The Greek word translated "now," occurring twice in John 12:31 is **νυν**, and is a word used to indicate the **present moment**.*

Jesus speaks of Satan's expulsion from power as something just about to happen, so He could not have been speaking about the Devil's plunge into the lake of fire. The Savior saw something happening in His own ministry that would, in effect, seal the Evil One's doom. Adding to the power of this announcement is the sad and somber tone of Jesus' words just a few sentences earlier: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from

Any power the Devil has is only because God gives it to him for a season.

this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour" (JOHN 12:27). In a moment of transparent tenderness, He

lets us know that He is carrying a tremendous emotional burden—the burden is His “hour.”

Throughout John’s gospel, Jesus refers to His “hour”—the time of His suffering and death. It hangs over His whole life; He is never unaware of it. In this instance, Jesus has just portrayed His death in heartbreaking imagery: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (JOHN 12:24). Christ is the *grain of wheat* that will soon perish, and He knows that His hour has finally come.

See John 2:4; 4:21,23; 5:25,28; 7:8,30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; 17:1.

There is something hauntingly sad about the way the term *my hour* or *his hour* is used here. Think about the way we use that word today. An Olympic runner who comes from behind and surges to victory in the last moment is said to have had her “finest hour.” Parents sit in a concert hall and fight back tears as the audience around them is spellbound by the pianist’s skills. Mom and Dad have known the exceptional talent of their son, but now the world sees it; it is his “finest hour.” For us “the hour” is the moment of success, fame, or hard-

Jesus knew the difficulty He would face at His trial and crucifixion, and despite a desire to avoid it, He endured it knowing that it was the plan for the redemption of humanity (LUKE 22:42). A plan the triune God made from eternity past.

earned recognition. For Jesus it was the moment of His suffering, death, and rejection.

Who would ever expect an announcement of victory in such a sad context? Yet even though His soul is troubled, even though He must now face an unimaginable period of torture and pain, Jesus issues the declaration: "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out" (JOHN 12:31).

Jesus understands that the cross will topple Satan from his throne of power. Satan feared such a turn of events.

The Cross Is The Verdict— Hell Is The Sentencing

As a young Christian I was taught that the Devil wanted Jesus to be crucified, that he delighted on the day his wish came true, and that Satan and all of his minions celebrated from Friday through early Sunday morning when their party was crashed by Jesus' resurrection. But the picture of Satan partying seems far removed from what we find in Scripture.

Consider the moment when Jesus first tells His disciples that He is going to Jerusalem to be crucified. "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (MATT. 16:21).

Such a grim destiny does not sit well with Peter. After all, he has given up everything to follow Jesus—his family, his business, his comfortable routine. Has he given

up everything to follow a Messiah who is going to die?

No, Peter will have none of this, and he decides to talk some sense into his friend. "Peter took [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you' " (MATT. 16:22).

Before we are too tough on Peter, however, let's look at it from his perspective. Isn't he simply trying to act the way any good friend would? Imagine a dear friend telling you he is taking a trip to a place where he knows a bloodthirsty crowd is waiting to kill him. What kind of a friend would you be if you didn't try to stop him? Peter's expression is the natural, loving reaction of a good friend. Yet Jesus sees it as pure evil.

How stunned Peter must have been when Jesus turned to him and sternly said, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (MATT. 16:23). Without realizing it, the fisherman-turned-apostle has just become Satan's mouthpiece. The Devil is using Peter's well-intentioned words as an attempted roadblock to the cross.

The cross was the key to "the ruler of this world" being "cast out." Jesus saw His death looming large in the hours before Him; and while it would be vicious in its brutality, He could see through to the victory. It would be *His hour* that finally brought *Satan's hour* to an end.

The apostle Paul makes this point clear when he says



that Jesus “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them” (COL. 2:15). The “rulers and authorities” are those demonic forces that get their comeuppance at the cross. Paul’s words paint a picture of a great military general whose valor in battle has secured a great victory for his people. Now he

While Jesus’ death would be vicious in its brutality, He could see through to the victory. It would be His hour that finally brought Satan’s hour to an end.

marches these enemy soldiers forth as prisoners of war to be openly mocked and ridiculed.

“The Lord Jesus Christ has done everything for his people, fought their battle, won their victory, and, on their behalf, celebrated the triumph in the streets of heaven, ‘leading captivity captive.’ What more, then, do we want? Surely Christ is enough for us.”²

Satan’s final destruction—being thrown into the fiery lake—is something we can eagerly await. But Jesus has

*We await Satan’s condemnation not only for our freedom from his attacks but because **Satan’s destruction** coincides with the establishment of the eternal kingdom of God with humanity (REV. 21:3).*

already secured the victory, striking the deathblow to the Devil and his dominion by going to the cross. Satan's descent into hell is just the carrying out of the verdict issued at Calvary.

Many see the cross as a temporary setback and the resurrection as the delayed victory. But the significance of the resurrection is that it confirms the soul-saving, Satan-crushing work of the cross. John Stott says it concisely: "The cross was the victory won, and the resurrection the victory endorsed, proclaimed and demonstrated."

Like the resurrection, the final punishment of our enemy just confirms the success of the cross. So while we must endure the Devil's activities for now, we are facing an enemy who is already mortally wounded. This is what our Savior has done to Satan by dying on the cross for us.

¹ John Stott, *The Epistle of John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1964), 99.

² C. H. Spurgeon, "Death and Its Sentence Abolished," The Spurgeon Archive, <http://spurgeon.org/sermons/2605.htm>, accessed on December 2, 2010.



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