

The Devil, Fact or Fiction?

Introduction

According to the Barna Group, the majority of Christians **do not** believe that Satan or that the devil actually exist. However, according to an AP-AOL news poll, up to 97% of evangelical Christians believe that angels exist.

God is the only eternal self-existent being represented in the Bible (Isaiah 41:4; Isaiah 44:6,8; Isaiah 45:6,21; Revelation 1:8). Satan is not self-existent. Satan must have, therefore, had a point of origin (Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2). God is the Father of all spirits including Satan (Job 12:10; Ephesians 2:2; Hebrews 12:9). He is a created being that rebelled against God.

Satan did not abide in truth (John 8:44). Satan “fell” into condemnation (1 Timothy 3:6). Angels (demons) were cast into Hades when they sinned (II Peter 2:4). Angels didn’t keep their own domain. They abandoned their proper abode and were cast down (Jude 6-7). War in heaven against Satan’s army vs. Michael, the Arc Angel & other angels...Satan was cast “out” of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). Satan has already lost his war against God (I Corinthians 15:54-57; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:12-15; Revelation 1:18).

Satan is a defeated foe. Here are a few examples found in the Bible of when he was defeated.

1. God won the war in heaven – Satan cast to earth (Revelation 12:7-9).
2. God “tests” Job with the Devil – “you think Job is good, take away blessings...he will curse you” (Job 1:11-12; Job 2:4-6).
3. Jesus overcame the Devils temptation in wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).
4. Jesus cast out demons during Jesus’; ministry (Luke 10:17-20).
5. Jesus’ sinless life, death & resurrection defeated Satan (Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-16; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 1:18).
6. Every time a “sinner” becomes a Christian the Devil loses (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13), “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God...” (Luke 15:10).

Mike Riley in The Preacher’s Files gives five ways we are attacked by Satan. They are:

- 1) Keep you out of the church (Hebrews 10:25).
- 2) Get Christians back into the world (Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26-39; 2 Peter 2:20-22).
- 3) Render Christians useless (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 1 Timothy 5:14-15; 2 Timothy 2:17).
- 4) Disrupt or corrupt worship and doctrine (2 Corinthians 2:17; Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Peter 2:3).
- 5) Cause trouble and division among brethren (Proverbs 6:14, 19; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Jesus defeated Satan (The Devil). “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”(Colossians 2:15). The idea

here is that Jesus bound all of His enemies and paraded around the city dragging them behind, tied to the back of His chariot. It was an “Open Show” for all to see.

I know what you are thinking because I used to think the same thing. If Satan is defeated, having no power, why is he still attacking us? When the Bible says that Satan is defeated, it means he has no real power of his own but is still loose to attack the saints. Before, he had power and was even called, “the god of this world.” (II Corinthians 4:4) Adam gave that power; his God given authority to rule, to Satan and Jesus took it back. (Colossians 2:15) After the resurrection, just before he ascended into heaven, He gave His followers their marching orders, saying “All power is given unto me in heaven and earth, go ye there for... (Mathew 28:18) “All power” is all power. That leaves none for evil to use except that which you and I give him. Satan can draw power from us but must deceive us into giving it to him. Eve was a good example of one who was deceived and relinquished her power otherwise known as authority...and Adam followed her example. If we stand on God’s Word, we hold on to our authority and cannot be overcome. That’s what Jesus did. He said to Satan, “It is written.”

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1Peter 5:8) I see several things here:

1. He roams the earth... always looking and checking on us.
2. He is like a roaring lion...it’s a scare tactic.
3. He is looking for someone whom he can devour...that means there are many he cannot devour. He looks for those of us that are weak in the faith and are willing to give up on our principles. Remember, the lost are taken at his will because they operate in the flesh and are easily influenced. The believer is whom he is seeking to devour because he does not want us to reveal Christ to the world.
4. We are to be sober, constantly on the lookout for an attack.

We are instructed to steadfastly resist him in the faith...or by faith. How?, by saying, “it is written” and quoting what is written and believing it with all our hearts. Example! You are in a bad economy and you lost your job. Satan brings fear to you that everything is going to crash and you will soon be on the street begging bread. You read the scriptures and see Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Who do you believe? the voice in your head or the voice speaking to you from the pages of the Bible?

But why does God allow us to be attacked? He tossed Satan out of heaven and Jesus defeated him on the earth in the flesh, as the 2nd Adam, so why is he still here, tempting us? It’s all about authority. God gave Adam the authority to rule or subdue the earth. He lost that position of authority when he fell into sin. He went from king to slave. Satan took over as the “god of this world” and held that position of authority until Jesus came and took it back. (Colossians 2:15) Man lost it and man got it back. As I have already mentioned, Jesus said, just before He ascended into heaven, “All Power Is Given Unto Me” in heave and earth. (Mathew 28:18) That was the defining moment that gave His followers the legal right to rule in His stead. He had already given them the authority but now it was time to enforce the law... go and make disciples. The judgment of death to Satan had been decreed by heaven and Jesus gave us the task of ruling over Satan until

his final sentence is carried out which is to be tossed into the lake of fire. Here are a few more scriptures to show the transfer of authority.

1. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Mathew 16:19)
2. Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."(Luke 10:17-20)
3. "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"(Romans 16:20)
4. "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says." (Mark 11:23)

There are other scriptures but these should do as to the general idea that Jesus passed on the authority to rule to His church. I will agree that the church has not done a good job in ruling over the earth. The church has allowed demons and all the other ills of this world to rule over it but we can still take authority individually anytime we want and rule over our immediate world. The loss of authority came by man's disobedience. The restoration of authority to man also came by the man, Jesus but was through His obedience. Now that it is restored and in the hands of the redeemed, we need to use our authority in Christ to rule over Satan and the evil of this world....to take dominion as God originally intended. "And they **overcame him** (Satan) because of the **blood of the Lamb** and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. (Revelation 12:11) NIV

So Satan is allowed to roam the earth, seeking whom he may devour while he waits his final end. We are admonished to resist him steadfastly in the faith. (1Peter 5:8-9) which keeps us in authority until Jesus returns. However, It's not enough to just hear the Word. You must act upon it for it to be effective. That means you speak it out, over and over until you believe it and Satan is convinced that you will not move off your premise. If you wavier from what God said, Satan can steel your authority and will keep at you until you fall. Romans 8:28 says in effect, that if I am called according to His purposes and love Him, I can say that He will work EVERYTHING together for good. This defeats the attack because it gives me faith and hope to go on and believe God for all my needs. Understand?

So there is a real Devil and he roams the earth seeking to devour any believer who is not aware of his tricks and schemes. Ephesians 6:11 says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Read the chapter and see if you are wearing all the armor. Most Christians don't even know they need armor and some pick and choose which part of the armor they want to wear but never wear it all at one time. As you review the different parts of God's body armor, realize that all but one, the sword of the Spirit, is defensive. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. That is offensive to the pulling down of accusations, lies, tormenting spirits, fear and all the other stuff Satan can throw at you. It has two edges and can cut deep every time.

Jesus compared Himself to Satan as opposites (John 10:10a). He said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Satan will try to steal your peace, hope and everything else that you do not give to the Lord. Jesus, on the other hand, will give you a life that is full of abundance...Love, peace, longsuffering and all the rest of the fruits of His Spirit.

John 10:10b should not be used as though it gives some promise of an improved physical life for the Christian. Such a view, in light of the context of the chapter, is shallow, and it overlooks the profound truth of the passage. The passage promises superior, superabundant spiritual life, life empowered by the indwelling of Jesus Christ. This is what Paul meant when he said he counted all things loss that he might win Christ. John 10:10 promises a spiritual dimension to life, not physical abundance. A focus on the physical trivializes the profound depth of John 10:10. That’s why I tied abundance, in the previous paragraph, with the fruit of the Spirit.

Some preachers use John 10:10b to support an abundance of stuff, saying that is why Jesus came...so we could get out of debt and live as a rich person. Their focus is on materialism instead of Spiritual Fruit. Jesus also said, as Mathew recorded in 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” The emphasis has never been on seeking material things. Jesus clearly says man’s first priority is the Lord and His righteousness. Things will be given to us because we need them to live and do His will. Wealth, i.e. the abundance of things, is relative to the society we live in. In some countries, families with a tin roof instead of a thatch style roof are considered wealthy.

It is true that God gives us the power to gain wealth. “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.” (Deuteronomy 8:18) However, the wealth gained is to be used to establish the covenant between you and the Lord.

It’s time to declare victory over Sin, Satan, Death, Worry, Fear, All Demons, and Anything Else that keeps you from ruling your immediate world and experiencing the love of God.

Until Next Time

Rev. John Marinelli

info@ministryandmarketingservices.com