

Call to Obedience #408
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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On the Devil

by Reimar Schultze

I am writing to you today without my regular enthusiasm, but rather out of a sheer sense of necessity. I am constrained to write to you about the devil, about who he is and what he is all about, because if you are a saint, you are up against him every day. If you are a believer whose life is filled with mediocrity, this article means nothing to you. So let us get started with the most obvious:

1. There is a devil. You need not go beyond the third chapter of the Bible to know that there is a devil for it says: *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field...* (Gen.3:1).

First, please notice that there are several names for the devil as there are for Jesus. The devil is known as the following: the serpent, the accuser, the adversary, the angel of light, the beast, Beelzebub, the deceiver, the dragon, the father of lies, the prince of the power of the air, the roaring lion, the ruler of this world, Satan and the wicked one. As you see by these names, the devil is a force to be reckoned with. He is your most powerful enemy. He has teeth and he is not a paper tiger. That is why Jesus called him the prince of the world (John 12:31). But by Jesus producing saints, He is planting His kingdom in the midst of the devils, for wherever the saint is, there is the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17).

The devil was there from the very beginning, first as Lucifer, the top angel, and then he became Satan by demotion. So Satan knows what has been and what is going on. He has encountered every man that ever walked on the face of the earth. And because he exalted himself above God, God created hell for him, the angels that followed him and all rebels. Since then, the devil has become the most powerful and subtle evangelist to convert, to subvert and confuse men, to bring them into his everlasting domain of darkness and dreadful suffering. By his self-exaltation, the devil became a symbol of the indelible wrath of God against anything that raises its head against His holy sublime Majesty.

2. The devil is against man. As soon as God created man, the devil set himself against him. The devil hates man in proportion to a man's value to God. The devil has the greatest hate toward those who pray; for by prayer, man engages the power of Almighty God to come down to defeat him. Praying saints snatch the never dying souls of men from the devil's powerful claws and places them as trophies at the feet of Jesus. Therefore, as much as Satan hates obedient followers of the Lord, he also hates prayer and he will do anything to get a man to neglect prayer, to skip prayer, to discourage prayer or to make it ineffectual. The devil will oppose any effort of men to gather together to pray.

3. The devil is in frequent conversation with God. If you are a saint, God and the devil may talk about you. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them... And the LORD said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth...?* (Job 1:6-8). God had a plan for Job and so did the devil. In like manner God has a foreordained plan for you every day and the devil also has his plans for you every day. There are things God wants you to do today and there are things the devil wants you to do today. If you do not meet with God in the morning, whose plan do you think will prevail that day? Oh, no, no, no, the devil is an angel of light and he will seldom get you into anything that is obviously wicked; he knows you well enough. No, he will just get you a tiny bit off course. That is all he needs to do to cause you to miss what God has for you on any given day. And since he is a liar, he will tell you at the end of the day that you did okay that day.

4. The devil will accuse you. He is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). He accused Job. He accused Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:1). He will accuse you day and night, that is, he comes against you by finding fault with you. As soon as you have done something for God, the devil will find fault with the way you went about it. The devil will never give you a compliment. Furthermore, the devil, knowing all your history, will bring up your past sins and failures again and again to let you know that you are spiritually unfit to live for God. God has forgiven and forgotten your past sins and failures, but the devil knows nothing about forgiveness or forgetting. Can you see why the saints need much prayer? Can you see why the Apostle Paul asked all his brothers and sisters to pray for him (Eph. 6:19-20)? There are times when the devil's accusations may be so severe that you may feel like your body is being nailed to a board of wood with 1000 nails.

5. There are times when the devil will put things into your head or your heart. *And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel* (1 Chron. 21:1). To provoke means to incite or to stimulate. Here God permitted Satan to tempt David in his pride.

Your thoughts may originate from God, come through your senses, from your head, from others or from the devil. The source of any idea or plan cannot always be easily traced. Sometimes it takes considerable time before you know whether something is of the Lord, of the deceiver or from your own selfish desires. That is why it is important for you to take time to be alone with God during the early hours of your day. But you say you don't have any spare time. Remarkable! My friend, it takes by far more time to fix a problem than to prevent it from happening in the first place. Waiting before God is never a waste of time, rather it is the wisest use of time.

The devil can also put things into your heart. That is deeper than in your thoughts. He put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus (John 13:2). Can you see why Solomon said: *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life* (Prov. 4:23)?

6. The devil will often put things in your way to prevent you from going where God wants you to go or from doing what God wants you to do. Paul wanted to be in Thessalonica, but it says that *Satan hindered him* (1 Thes. 2:18). In such cases, more earnest prayer is needed. At Gethsemane, Jesus prayed *more earnestly*.

7. The devil can take truth out of people's hearts: *Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved* (Luke 8:12).

Now, as the devil is a force to be reckoned with, so are you. John said, *...because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world* (1 John 4:4). This tells you that you are a greater threat to the devil than he is to you. Of course, Jesus talked to His disciples who had forsaken all. This great truth gave Paul confidence to say: *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us* (Rom. 8:37). The true saint can go into enemy territory and create havoc there. There, he can, by the grace of God, convert the most wicked sinner to become one of the greatest saints. Christ saves to the uttermost. A praying saint causes the devils to tremble.

Here is some weaponry that will help you to defeat the devil (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

1. When you are under the accusations of the devil, the best and quickest ways to get out from underneath them is by doing one or all of the following:

a) Give yourselves to audible praise. This is what the Apostle Paul and Silas did after they were beaten and put in jail. It took a while for them to get to their spiritual senses, but at the midnight hour, they began to praise the Lord; and they and all the prisoners were delivered; and the jailer's family came to Christ (Acts 16:25-34).

b) Quote the scriptures out loud as Jesus did when He was tempted (Luke 4:2-12).

c) Rebuke the devil audibly for you have the promise that if you do so, he will flee from you (James 4:7). So, who is more powerful, the devil or the saint? Who is putting who on the run? But be sure that you are never without the armor of God.

2. When the devil puts evil thoughts into your mind (he may even do that in the middle of your prayer time), do not accept them as coming from you. Do not blame yourself for them. Cast them out, throw them back at the devil and go on doing what God wants you to do. You cannot avoid him throwing trash at you, but you can refuse ownership of it.

3. Do not forget to witness whenever there is an opportunity. You cannot maintain a victorious Christian life without witnessing for Jesus. You cannot. It was said of those who are in heaven: *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony...* (Rev. 12:11).

4. Do not talk much about the devil. He loves to be talked about and he loves to be advertised. Do not give him this pleasure. Let 'Jesus' come from your lips. Keep Him as your constant focus. He is the author and finisher of your faith (Heb. 12:2). Look to Jesus and you shall live.

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