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What You Need to Know About Your Enemy, the Devil: Part 1

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ENEMY, THE DEVIL

This is the first in a brief series overviewing what the Bible says about Satan.

1. **If God is so smart, why did He create the devil, and if He is so strong, why doesn't He simply get rid of the devil?**

Unbelievers have directed this question to Christians throughout the centuries, often with a cynical attitude. Why indeed? Actually, this two-fold question has a simple two-fold answer—HE DIDN'T, BUT HE WILL!

A. God did not create the devil! To the contrary, Lucifer, the most prominent and powerful angel in the heavenlies led a rebellion against his Creator, resulting in his present day condition as history's most perverted celestial creature, namely, Satan!

B. God will someday rid Himself and His people of this deadly dragon!
"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

2. **What familiar poem, written by an unknown author best summarizes the current level of unbelief regarding the devil?**

*Men don't believe in a devil now, as their fathers used to do.
They've opened the door to the broadest creed to let his majesty thru.
There isn't a print of his cloven feet or a fiery dart from his bow
To be found on earth or anywhere, for the world has voted it so.
But who is mixing the fatal draught that kills both heart and brain,
And loads the earth each passing year with ten hundred thousand slain?
Who blights the bloom of the land today with the fiery breath of hell?
If the devil isn't or never was—won't somebody please rise and tell?
Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint and digs the pits for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the field of time when God is sowing pure wheat.
But the devil is voted just not to be—and of course the thing is true—
But who is doing the kind of work the devil is supposed to do?
Won't somebody step to the front right now—and immediately begin to show—
How the frauds and the crimes of the day spring up—for surely we want to know!
The devil was fairly voted out—and of course the devil's gone—
But simply fold would like to know, who carries his business on?*

3. **What does the world think of Satan?**

A. The "pagan" world

There is scarcely a culture, tribe, or society to be found in this world that does not have some concept or fear of an invisible evil power. This has been attested by Christian missionaries and secular anthropologists alike. Witch doctors, shrunken heads, voodoo dolls, and totem poles all give dramatic evidence of this universal fear. Only eternity will reveal how many millions of human beings who have been cruelly slaughtered upon thousands of grisly, blood soaked altars worldwide to appease some invisible evil power. One may well ask where this fear came from and of whom are they afraid.

B. The "enlightened" world

In essence, secular society simply denies his very existence. Most of the world today pictures the devil as a medieval and mythical two-horned, fork-tailed impish creature, dressed in red flannel underwear, busily pitching coal into the furnaces of hell! Thus, he lives only in the scripts of late night talk show hosts and stand-up comedians, via "the devil made me do it" jokes!

C. The "Christian" world

1. The sound from liberal pulpits. Satan is either ignored or downplayed in liberal churches today. These Christ-denying liberals have, of course, long since thrown out such concepts as the "old devil" and the "new birth." They now leave out the *d* in devil and add an *o* to God. It's a shame, but most words like *hell*, *damned*, and *devil* are found in the vocabularies of factory workers, politicians, school children, college students, and even professional people. They are not heard from behind pulpits of liberal churches—where they should be heard. Sometime ago a national secular magazine took a poll of some 5000 American clergymen and discovered that a full 73 percent ridiculed the concept of a personal devil of any sort.
2. The sound from conservative pulpits. George Banna's research, reported in his book, *What Americans Believe*, showed that almost half of evangelicals in the United States deny (or doubt) the existence of Satan, seeing him as only a symbol of all that is evil.

Many Bible-believing pastors it would thus seem are extremely reluctant to "give the devil his due," even if they believe in him.

Some time ago, this author wrote an article entitled, *If I Were the Devil*. In this article the following points were stressed:

"The first thing I would do would be to deny my own existence. The Bible informs us that God desires, perhaps above all else, to be fully believed in. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"*(Heb. 11:6).

"But this is not so with Satan! This disciple of doubt seems to thrive best when he is either underestimated, ignored or denied.

"Suppose there is a Bible-believing church which is going through a spiritual crisis. For some months no soul has walked its aisles. The attendance and offerings are down and the members are becoming restless. All Bible pastors have had these experiences. Finally, in desperation, a special committee is appointed by the congregation to discover the source of this coldness and lifelessness. After considerable prayer and probing, the committee submits its report. What are its findings? I believe it may be safely assumed that the average committee would lay the blame on one or more of the following: (1) the pastor; (2) certain officials; (3) a cold congregation; or (4) a difficult neighborhood.

"But what fact-finding group would return the following indictment? We believe the main source of our heartaches for the

past few months is satanic! We believe the reason no souls have been saved recently is due to an all-out attack on our church by the devil! We close this report with a strong recommendation that the congregation call a special meeting, rebuke Satan, plead the blood of Christ and claim the victory!

"If I were the devil I would deny my existence in the world and downplay it in the local church, thus freeing me to go about my business unheeded, unhindered, and unchecked."
(*The Baptist Bulletin*, Dec. 1971, p. 13)

4. **What is the scriptural view of Satan?**

In a sentence, he is as real a person as is Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Paul, John or the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

- A. **The devil is mentioned in seven Old Testament books** – Genesis, 1 Chronicles, Job (12 times), Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.
- B. **He is to be found in 19 New Testament books and is referred to by every New Testament writer.**
- C. **He is referred to by our Lord Jesus Christ some 15 times**—Note but a few of these.
 1. In Matt. 4, Jesus was not arguing with some type of principle in the desert, but with a vile person by the name of Satan—"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"(Matt. 4:10).
 2. In Matt. 16, Jesus realized that Satan was prompting or influencing Simon Peter to rebuke him—"But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"(Matt. 16:23).
 3. In Luke 22, Jesus speaks again to Simon Peter—"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"(Luke 22:31).
 4. In Luke 10, Jesus speaks of seeing Satan fall—"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"(Luke 10:18).
 5. In Matt. 25, Jesus speaks of the final abode of Satan and his followers (the unsaved)—"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"(Matt. 25:41).
 6. In John 8, Jesus accuses a group of ungodly Pharisees of being from their father, the devil—"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"(John 8:44).
 7. In John 6, Jesus reveals that one of his disciples, one of the twelve, was at that point (early in his ministry) being influenced by Satan—Later on,

that person (Judas) would become possessed by Satan. "*Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*" (John 6:70).

Thus, one simply cannot believe in the Bible and deny the existence of the devil!

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