



Conducted by
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“If Satan has been defeated as the Bible teaches, why is it that there is so much evil in the world, and why does it seem to be getting worse?”

The defeat of Satan by Christ is very real and is the basis of Salvation. We must not, however, fall into the trap of thinking that because the power of Satan in death has been conquered, that Satan himself has been destroyed. Peter warns Christians, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Paul also warns Christians, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). The reader should note that the Greek word **DIABOLOS** is one of the names of Satan. From this the English word ‘Devil’ is derived and should be applied only to Satan, as a proper name. The word **DAIMON** is frequently used but should be translated ‘demon’ and not ‘devil’. There is one Devil (Satan) but there are many demons. We should also note that the exact **origin** of sin is not discussed in the Bible; we are presented with the **fact** that sin entered into the world by Satan, and that the association of evil with sin is always personified in Satan.

So what do we have on which to build our initial assessment, and from which we must draw our conclusions? Satan is still abroad in the world and, in fact, has much of the world in the bondage of sin. He is the **progenitor** of sin, and Paul reminds us that ‘the sting of death is sin’; however, Jesus has conquered sin and death, and when we die in Him and become incorruptible and immortal then we shall experience the reality of the death and resurrection of Christ and the victory which these events accomplished, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15: 53-58). Furthermore, we Christians must believe – and teach – that if the power of good to **save** exists in the Person of the Christ of God, then with equal certainty we must assert that the power of evil to **destroy** exists in Satan. If we are to “overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21), then we can be certain that what we have to overcome really exists.

The Human Condition

If we need convincing that all of us need conversion and regeneration then surely some remarks made by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount forcibly express the duality of the human condition, and imply that He thought of us all as having something evil and corrupt in our nature. He said to His listeners, “If ye, **being evil**, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him” (Matt. 7:11).

Have you ever tried to analyse the human condition? It seems that we are an admixture of good and evil. Man cannot be **totally depraved** otherwise he could never respond to that which is good, i.e., he could never respond to the Gospel, or do any deed that could be classed as ‘good’. We know, of course, that everything which God

created was good, but unfortunately His highest creation, man, became tainted with sin when Satan entered the Garden and Adam and Eve responded to his overtures (lies, in fact). Because of this, we know that man has within him the propensity to respond to evil and therefore in his condition he cannot be **totally good**; his ultimate end is death, both spiritual and physical. Spiritual death is the result of separation from God, the Source of life; this is why man needs **reconciliation** with God, and this was effected in Christ Jesus His Son when He died and rose again from the dead.

The Return to Life

I am referring, of course, to the God-life; that which was tragically taken away by Satan, but which can be joyously restored in Christ. Paul says that the word of reconciliation is contained in the Gospel, and that the Apostles – acting as ambassadors of God and Christ – were making the appeal directly to us, as he says, “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (Read 2 Cor. 5: 14-21. The One who knew no sin, of course, was Christ Himself). It is worth noting that God does not need to be reconciled **to us**; it is **we** who need to be reconciled to Him.

The return to life, therefore, is the return to the life-source; it is the return to the God-life. This life was extended to Jesus Himself; John records the words of Jesus, “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5: 25-27). God sent the life of the God-head in His Son because He loved His fallen creation; as John says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (3:16). This life is effective through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the Gospel. On the Day of Pentecost Peter told his listeners what to do in order to gain this life, “Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

On to Maturity

I have never been an advocate of the theory of the ‘divided Christian’; one who serves God with the spirit, and serves Satan with the flesh. This idea degrades the Holy Spirit who in-dwells the Christian. Paul in his Philippian letter speaks about growth, “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” (3:16). He is saying that if we have developed a certain maturity by following the dictates of the Holy Spirit, then let us **go on** applying the same spiritual principles until we reach **full** maturity. Surely this is his message to the Colossian Christians also, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1,2).

I have gone to this length to show that with the Divine help of the in-dwelling Holy Spirit the Christian **can** become Christlike. Peter says that the Christian has become “a partaker of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), and surely it is a gross misrepresentation to say that Divine power **cannot** make a Christian eschew evil. Therefore, if it is true to say that Divine help can lead a Christian to spiritual maturity as a **human being**, then the reverse must also be true, i.e., that satanic influence can drag a non-Christian deeper and deeper into evildoing.

On To Degradation

You hardly need me to tell you that there is much evil in the world and that it seems to be getting worse. People are savagely attacked, defenceless babies are beaten, marauding gangs terrorise districts, aeroplanes are blown out of the sky by indiscriminate ‘bombers’, and so we could go on with an unending catalogue of evil. This

shouldn't surprise us because as we have said, Satan goes about as a roaring lion. Paul puts the human condition quite succinctly, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16). There are many people who are servants of Satan, and whether they realise it or not, they are yielding to his evil designs. The further they go along this road the more degraded they will become; that is inevitable. God is trying to **save** the world and to lead it in the paths of love, peace, compassion and forgiveness;) Satan is trying to **destroy** the world and lead it in the paths of hate, jealousy, war and final degradation. John Milton in his 'Paradise Lost' gives us a true picture of the satanic aspiration, for he has Satan saying, "To reign is worth ambition, though in hell: Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven" (Book 1 Page 8 Lines 20, 21). He **will** reign in hell, because that is the place prepared for him and his angels; the tragedy is that he will reign over many who are his servants on earth **now**, and who will be his subjects in hell.

So to our question. The battle has been joined and won by God and His Christ. But Satan is still loose and has dominion over many lives. That is why there is so much evil in the world. What does annoy me is that so many blame God for this. That we must never do.

(All questions, please, to:

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