

Demonology: *Understanding and Combatting Your Defeated Foe*
Session 3

Introduction

Last week we asked two questions. First, who is Satan? We answered that he is a creature and not a rival deity, a fallen angel whose ultimate sin was pride, the chief of the fallen angels, the one who brought sin to our race, and a being known by many names — none of them a proper name, all of them titles.

Then we began a second question we didn't finish: what is Satan's present position? Is he a king, or a captive? We answered the first half, letter a. He is no king. God never granted him dominion over man, and when he offered Christ the kingdoms of the world, the father of lies was doing what he does: lying.

This morning we finish that question and add two more.

So, let's pick up where we stopped last week. Continuing to answer last week's second question, *number 2*.

2. What is Satan's Present Position?

We now ask, *letter b*,

b) Is Satan a Captive?

The answer is: **Yes. He was defeated and bound at the cross of Christ.** How do we know this? Let's look at several biblical texts. First, on the eve of his crucifixion, as Jesus was praying for the Father to prepare him for the cross that was just before him, he said of Satan,

✠ *John 12:31-32 - Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."*

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Do you hear what Jesus is saying? He is saying,

“Now that I am going to the cross, the ruler of this world will be cast out.”

And this isn't the only text; consider also,

✦ *John 16:5-11*

This text, too, is the night before his crucifixion, and the Lord says that when the Spirit comes on the day of Pentecost, at that time, the ruler of this world (Satan) will already have been judged. Why? Because Satan was judged at the cross. The judgment that was promised in Genesis 3:15, where God said to Satan,

✦ *Genesis 3:15 – I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

That promise of a head-crushing judgment was fulfilled at the cross. By Pentecost, the devil was already judged.

But wait, there's more! Consider also,

✦ *Colossians 2:13-15 - And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

Here, Paul says it most explicitly. At the cross, God disarmed and put Satan to open shame by triumphing over him in Christ.

Now, all that said, we might ask, “Why was Satan bound? What has God accomplished by Triumphing over Satan in Christ's cross?” The answer is, the power

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of sin was broken. Remember, last week we established that God has not given Satan dominion over humanity. Satan is only the ruler of this world in as much as we align ourselves with him and under him. So, what causes us to do this? What power drives all men to do this? Sin! And, at the cross, the power of sin was broken! Last week, we learned that Satan brought sin to humanity. Well, at the cross, the Devil's work of bringing sin to humanity was broken. We see this in,

✠ *1 John 3:8 - Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.***

Sin once compelled us to align ourselves with, and submit to, the Devil's tyranny. But, at the cross of Christ, the enslaving power of sin was undone. Consider Peter's words,

✠ *1 Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*

And consider Paul's words,

✠ *Romans 6:6-7 - We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

So, what now is the result? Now that the power of sin is defeated for those who are Christ's, what is the outcome? This, the plundering of the Devil's house! Jesus says,

✠ *Mark 3:27 - But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.*

You see? Now that Christ's cross has defeated sin's power, we who once aligned ourselves to the Devil are being claimed for God in Christ. The devil's house is being plundered, and he is powerless to do anything about it!

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Thus, we come now to Revelation 20, which says,

✦ *Revelation 20:1-7*

In light of the clear, non-symbolic texts that we've already looked at this morning, we can now see what Revelation 20 is all about. The binding of Satan is the breaking of sin's power, which formerly united us to Satan. Thus, the binding of Satan means that nothing now keeps God's elect among the nations from coming to him in repentance and faith. The thousand years are not a literal thousand years, but a symbolic number that represents the great period of time in which, now that the cross has destroyed the works of the devil, now that sin's power is broken, the elect among the nations are hearing and believing the gospel of Christ without hindrance. The first resurrection is our new birth, regeneration, our spiritual raising to new life in Christ (see Eph 2:1-6, Romans 6:4-8). If you aren't born again, you won't experience a resurrection until the thousand years are ended, Christ returns, and all, righteous and wicked, are raised bodily.

So, you see, Satan is bound. He is bound in that his works have been destroyed. Now that Jesus died for our sin, sin's power no longer compels us to align with Satan and submit to his tyranny.

This is true, yet some hear this and ask: **Number 3**

3. Is the Lion Really Chained?

Some of you might already be thinking it. If Satan was bound at the cross, if his works were destroyed and sin's power broken, why does the world look like this?

Further, why would Peter say,

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- ✠ 1 Peter 5:8-9 - *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*

So, is the beast bound? Or is the lion on the prowl, seeking someone to devour? The answer is...yes!

Yet, to understand how this is all true, two things must be said. First, **letter a**, we need to see that

a) *A chained enemy is not an inactive enemy.*

Consider that fallen angels were already in chains long before Christ came. We see this in texts like,

- ✠ Jude 6 - *And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—*

Here, Jude teaches us that demons have been chained since their rebellion. Yet, in the gospels, we see demons doing all sorts of things and wreaking all sorts of havoc.

Dear ones, the Bible nowhere teaches that the binding of Satan means that Satan and his demons are utterly inactive. Rather, the Bible teaches that the power that once caused us to align with him (our sin) has been destroyed, leaving him incapable of keeping the elect from leaving him and coming to Christ. He cannot keep his house from being plundered.

Next, **letter b**, we need to understand that,

b) *There are two victories, and we are living between them.*

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We've thus far said that, at the cross, our Lord defeated and judged our foe. He crushed our enemy's head, fulfilling the promise of Genesis 3:15.

Now, dear ones, hear Paul:

✠ *Romans 16:20 - The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Notice: *under your feet*. Not Christ's feet, because that victory is already won — yours. And notice it is still future; Paul says, “*will soon crush*.”

This second victory over the enemy is the final victory that we will have over our enemy when Christ returns. I am tempted to re-preach my own sermon on Romans 16, but I'll resist that temptation. Instead, I'll quote the 18th-century Scottish Reformed Baptist, Robert Haldane. He put it so well, saying,

There were two victories to be obtained over Satan. By the first, his head was bruised under the feet of Jesus Christ. By the second, the rest of his body will be bruised under the feet of believers.¹

Alright, we come now to our fourth question, **number 4**

4. What Should Our Attitude Toward Satan Be?

¹ Quote taken from Frederick S. Leahy, *Satan Cast Out*, p.29.

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We've now spent two mornings on Satan's position. He is no king. He is a captive; he is bound. His head is crushed, and yet he prowls. So, the practical question: how should you and I actually think about him?

Dear ones, there are two ditches on either side of this road, and I suspect this room has people in both. The first ditch is, *letter a*,

a) To think too little of him.

To treat him as a doctrine you affirm on paper and never think about again. You'd never say he isn't real — you just live as though he isn't. Peter will not allow it. He says, "be sober-minded, be watchful, because your adversary prowls." Paul will not allow it either; he tells the Corinthians he wants them alert to Satan's designs so they would not be outwitted. In Ephesians 6, he teaches us how to war against him.

Next, the other ditch is,

b) To think too much of him.

To speak as though the conflict between God and Satan were a struggle between two great powers with the outcome hanging in the balance. Dear ones, it is not. Satan is on the prowl, yes. But he is a defeated lion.

In a sense, both ditches are actually the same error: both of them take our eyes off Christ. You see, one ditch forgets there's a battle. The other ditch forgets who won it.

Which brings us to a truth that is vital for our entire course. Leahy writes:

"The Christian cannot rightly view his adversary unless the triumph of Christ is given its proper place. If our faith does not see Christ as all-

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*victorious, we shall know little of victory. Even in the face of demonic power the Christian is to rejoice in the words of Paul, 'But thanks be to God who always leadeth us in triumph' (2 Corinthians 2:14)."*²

That is our whole course in a sentence. Not "understand your foe." Not "combat your foe."

Understand and combat your *defeated* foe — and you can only do either one if you see Christ as all-victorious first.

So, let's discuss.

Discussion questions

Doctrinal:

- We said Satan's binding *is* the breaking of sin's power over us. If a friend said, "That's not what binding means — binding means he can't act," where would you take him in Scripture?
- Jude says the demons have been chained since their rebellion. So, what changed at the cross? What could Satan do before the cross that he cannot do now?
- Paul says God will crush Satan under *your* feet. Why yours, when Christ already crushed his head?
- In Revelation 20:3, we see the purpose of the binding in plain words. What does it say Satan is prevented from doing — and what does it *not* say he's prevented from doing?

Practical:

- Peter says "resist him." Name one thing a Christian actually does on a Tuesday to obey that command.

² Ibid, p. 32.

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- The devil's house is being plundered, and he cannot stop it. What should that do to the way we speak to our unbelieving neighbors?
- Your friend says, "I don't really think about the devil much." Is that a problem? What would you say to him?
- Someone in this church says, "I believe Christ won, but it doesn't feel like it in my house right now." What do you say?

Experiential:

- Which ditch do you fall into — thinking too little of him, or too much? Why that one?
- Did anything in this make you think differently than what you did two weeks ago? What was it?