

Christ on the Cross, part 2

Jesus Died to Crush Our Enemies (Christus Victor)

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” **C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters**

Slavery to our Enemy

Scripture attributes many names to Satan including the Dragon, Serpent, Enemy, Devil, Tempter, Murderer, Father of Lies, Adversary, Accuser, Destroyer, and the Evil One. His knowledge, presence, and power are limited because he is an angelic being created by God for the purpose of glorifying and serving God (Ezekiel 28:14). Motivated by pride, Satan declared war on God and was kicked out of heaven along with a third of the angels who joined his rebellion and became demons (Isaiah 14:11-23; Ezekiel 28:1-19; Revelation 12:3-4, 7-9).

Beginning with our first parents, Adam and Eve, Satan continued his war on God. Fortunately, he need not defeat us if we are aware of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Some of Satan’s common tactics include:

- sexual sin (1 Corinthians 7:5)
- sex and marriage between Christians and non-Christians (2 Cor. 6:15)
- false religion, false teaching, false Jesus (1 Cor. 10:14-22; 2 Cor. 11:1-4; 1 Tim. 4:1-2)
- bitterness (Eph. 4:17-32)
- foolishness and drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18-21)
- idle, gossiping busybodies (1 Timothy 5:11-15)
- lying (John 8:44)

Some of his more extreme schemes include:

- torment (Acts 5:16)
- physical injury (Acts 8:4-8)
- false miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
- accusation (Revelation 12:10)
- murder, including suicide (John 8:44)

Freedom to our Jesus

Tragically, by sinning everyone who has ever lived has chosen to align with Satan in his war against God. Additionally, our sin is the result of having something or someone other than God as our highest value and worth. These seemingly good things (from relationships to success) invariably enslave us and become demonic false gods that we worship by putting our life toward them instead of God.

The only exception is Jesus Christ who resisted every temptation (Luke 4:1-13) and remained continually sinless (Hebrews 4:15). Graciously, Jesus alone can and will defeat Satan, liberate us from slavery to the worship of false gods, and usher us into a freedom that continues forever with Him. This was made possible by Jesus dying in our place for our sins to defeat our Enemy and liberate us into new life.

Romans 6: Slaves to Righteousness

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death.22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: Life in the Spirit

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Colossians 2: Alive in Christ

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.13 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,14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Hebrews 2:¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

1 Cor 15

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Ephesians 2: By Grace Through Faith

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience---³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ---by grace you have been saved---⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 5: The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

2 Cor: Paul Defends His Ministry

1 I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ---I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!---2 I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Revelation 12: Satan Thrown Down to Earth

7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,8 but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world---he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"