

Activities of Satan



How to Overcome Evil (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

Our theme this week is one which vitally concerns all of us: How to Overcome Evil.

In my introductory talk yesterday I shared with you one key revelation out of God's Word, evil is not something, it is someone. I'll say that again, it's so important. Evil is not something, it is someone. Behind evil there is a person, in fact there is a whole host of evil spirit beings. The Living Bible calls them "persons without bodies," vast hosts of spirits, evil spirits in the spirit world. We're not dealing with the world of the senses; we're dealing with another world, the spirit world which is discerned only spiritually and not through the senses. And in this kingdom of evil, there is a ruler. His name is Satan. That's his Old Testament name meaning "the resister, the adversary." In the New Testament, his main title is the Devil, meaning "the slanderer or the accuser." At one time, Satan was not Satan; he was Lucifer, one of the brightest and wisest and most beautiful of all God's archangels. But, his heart was lifted up in pride because of his beauty and his wisdom. He sought a place of equality with God Himself. He led his angels in rebellion against God. He and his angels were cast out of the heaven of God's presence and set up a rival kingdom in the spiritual realm somewhere in the New Testament referred to as the heavenlies. And that is the source of opposition to us. That is where evil comes from in its pressures against us. If we trace it to its source, that is its source.

Today I'm going to describe some of the main ways that Satan works against us. Always remember, his name means the resister, the adversary, the opposer.

First of all, I want to give you a few scriptural pictures of Satan. And I want to say in advance, none of them are very pleasant. He's never presented in a pleasant way anywhere in the Bible. Revelation 12:9:

> "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world..." (NASB)

Notice there two pictures, the dragon, the serpent. The dragon is a great powerful beast that inspires fear that rages. It's very vivid for me because some years back I inherited from my family some antique Chinese vessels, porcelain

vessels, that were all marked with the Chinese dragon. And so the image of the dragon is always very real in me. Let me say that I decided I didn't want to keep those vessels in my home and so I got rid of them simply because I didn't want the portrait of Satan in my home all the time. But for that reason, the dragon is particularly vivid to me. It's large, it's fearful, it's fierce, it's awe inspiring, it threatens, it terrifies, and it tramples and destroys. On the other hand, the serpent or the snake is small, sometimes scarcely visible. He doesn't come in that same way as the dragon but he kind of inserts himself through some little crack or hole.

I was born in India and grew up the first five years of my life there. And one of the problems in India is the cobra. At least 500 people die every year of snake bite in India. But the cobra doesn't come like a dragon. He comes up the bathroom pipe and he's in the room before you know it. Well, that again, is how Satan operates. He can be a dragon or he can be a snake. He can be large and fierce and awe-inspiring and terrifying or he can be very slimy and slippery and come in through some little hole where you wouldn't expect an animal to come.

And then, turn to John 8:44 and this is what Jesus says to the people who were trying to kill him.

> "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (NIV)

Notice the three titles there, murderer, liar, and father of lies.

And then, in John 10:10 Jesus gives another designation:

> "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (NIV)

The thief there is a person of course. It's Satan. He's contrasted with Jesus. Satan is the life taker. Jesus is the life giver.

Let's just sum up those pictures of Satan that we've looked at briefly there - the dragon, the serpent, the murderer, the liar, the father of lies, the thief, the life taker, none of those pictures is pretty, but they're honest. They're true to the facts. We need to know them.

And then, notice what Jesus says about the reason that Satan comes into our lives. He says, "Satan, the thief, comes only to steal and kill and destroy." There are three purposes that Satan has, to steal, to kill, to destroy. Whenever Satan comes into our lives, that's what he comes to do. He'll disguise his motives. He'll seek to conceal his presence and his activity, but his ultimate objectives never change, to steal, to kill, to destroy. To steal means to take away that which is rightfully ours, our inheritance in God, the blessings that God wants us to have. To kill is to take our life, physically. Remember, he's a murderer. He kills people physically. To destroy goes beyond time into eternity. To destroy is the ultimate ongoing eternal destruction of the lost soul that's been deceived and ensnared by Satan. So bear in mind continually what Jesus warned us. He only comes to steal, to kill, to destroy.

We've looked at some of the main pictures of Satan given us in the Scripture. Now let's look at some of the main ways that he works. What does he do against us? Let's go back to Revelation 12, verse 9 for a moment.

> "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called and Satan who deceives the whole world..." (NASB)

That's the first and most characteristic operation of Satan, he deceives, he works through deception, he's a liar, he does not come with the truth, he does not present facts as they really are, he deceives us and only after he has deceived us, can he accomplish his other purposes against us. So we need to bear in mind continually, that Satan operates on the basis of deception. Deception is the way he initially ensnares his victims. Once he has us deceived, then he can do against us the other evil things that are his purpose. So always be on your guard against deception. The real safeguard against deception is the Word of God, the truth of Scripture. The Scripture is true and if we're persuaded of anything contrary to the Scripture, some way behind that persuasion is the enemy, Satan, and his aim in deceiving us is to destroy us.

We'll turn to Matthew, chapter 4, verse 3, a picture of the temptation of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness. It says:

> "The tempter came to him [Jesus] and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'" (NIV)

Notice the title there given to Satan, "the tempter." To tempt is to entice. Satan entices us to do evil. He sets before us something that seems desirable and attractive and once we're deceived by him it's pretty easy for us to believe that it's desirable and attractive. Then he says, "If you want this thing, then this is what you need to do." But this, that he's

trying to persuade us to do, is always something that's in disobedience to God. He tempts or entices us to disobey God on the basis of something apparently attractive or worthwhile that he's offering us.

And then,in First Thessalonians, chapter 2, in verse 18, Paul writes this:

> "For we wanted to come to you [that's the Thessalonian Christians], I Paul, more than once, and yet Satan thwarted us." (NASB)

And, another version says, "Satan hindered us." That's another typical activity of Satan, especially towards the servants of God. He thwarts. He hinders. He opposes their intentions. He puts obstacles in their way. He resists. That's one of the meanings of Satan, the resister.

And then we look in Revelation 12:10 speaking of Satan again.

> "...For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down." (NIV)

Another typical activity of Satan. He accuses. He accuses us primarily to God. Why does he accuse us? What's his motive? His motive is to prove us guilty. See, the greatest single tool that Satan has against us is guilt. If he can keep us feeling guilty, then we are never a match for him. We can never rise up, take the offensive against him and defeat him. So he is continually accusing us. He's misrepresenting us. He's bringing out all our bad points and overlooking our good ones and saying everything's bad that can be said against us, his aim being to make us guilty.

So let's just quickly sum up those four ways in which Satan operates. They're not the only four, but they're four main ways. He deceives, he tempts or entices, he hinders, and he accuses.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be explaining how Jesus has already defeated Satan on our behalf, a vital lesson.

Radio Program

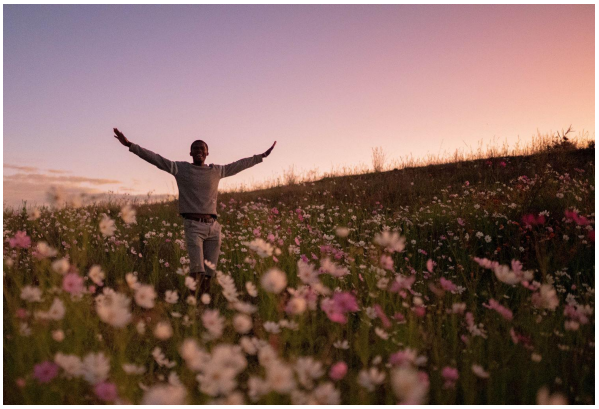
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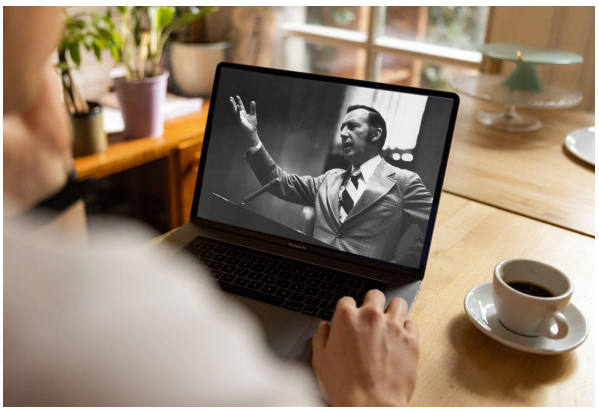
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