

Associated Gospel Churches - Articles of Faith and Doctrine

The Personality of Satan

March 19, 2006

The Personality of Satan

XVIII. The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the father of lies, a murderer from the beginning and the great deceiver of all nations; that he will be overcome by the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Seed of the woman, and cast into the Bottomless Pit for a thousand years, and finally committed to the Lake of Fire with all his angels to be tormented forever and ever.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Job 1:6-12; Genesis 3:15; John 8:44; Ephesians 6:12-16; Revelation 20:1-3,7-10

The Personality of Satan

- **Satan**

- a person

- not just an evil ‘force’ or a myth/superstition

- head of the demons (evil angels who sinned against God and work evil in the world)

- name derived from Hebrew word meaning “adversary”

- “One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.” (Job 1:6)

The Personality of Satan

- **Satan**

- **other names include**

- **the devil (e.g. Matt. 4:1, John 8:44) (Greek *diabolos* = “slanderer”)**
 - **the serpent (e.g. Gen. 3:1,14; Rev. 20:2)**
 - **Beelzebub, prince of demons (e.g. Matt. 12:24)**
 - **prince (ruler) of this world (e.g. John 12:31, 14:30)**
 - **the ruler of the kingdom of the air (Eph. 2:2)**
 - **the evil one (e.g. Matt. 13:19; 1 John 2:13)**

The Personality of Satan

- Origin of Satan and demons

- Satan & demons – “fallen” angels

- “Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire *prepared for the devil and his angels.*’”
(Matt. 25:41)

- angels rebelled and sinned against God

- “*And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these He has kept in darkness bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.*” (Jude 6)

- “*For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...*” (2 Pet. 2:4)

The Personality of Satan

- **Origin of Satan and demons**

- rebellion likely occurred some time between Genesis 1:31 and 3:1

“God saw all that He had made, and *it was very good*. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.” (Gen. 1:31)

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1)

- all that God had made was very good (Gen. 1:31); but Satan appears as the serpent by Gen. 3:1

The Personality of Satan

- **Origin of Satan and demons**

- **Isaiah 14:12-15 – a more controversial passage**

“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.” (Isa. 14:12-15)

- **reference to the King of Babylon, but some see also a reference to the pride and fall of Satan**

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

1. **Satan was the originator of sin**

- **tempted and deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden**

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”... Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’” (Gen. 3:1,13)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

1. **Satan was the originator of sin**

- **father of those who do evil**

“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.” (John 8:44)

“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” (1 John 3:8)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

- 2. Satan & demons oppose & try to destroy God's work**

- **they try to destroy God's creation, including people**

- **often manifested by destructive effects of peoples' lives**

“A man in the crowd answered, ‘Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground... It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him...’ (Mark 9:17-22)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

- 2. Satan & demons oppose & try to destroy God's work**

- **they try to destroy God's creation, including people**

“When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet Him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet... Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones...

The demons begged Jesus, ‘Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.’ He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.” (Mark 5:2-13)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

- 2. **Satan & demons oppose & try to destroy God's work**

- **Satan accuses God's people**

- “...For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.” (Rev. 12:10b)

- “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.”
(Zech. 3:1)

- “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.’ ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ Satan replied.” (Job 1:8-9)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

- 2. Satan & demons oppose & try to destroy God's work**

- **they try to destroy God's people**

- “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Pet. 5:8)

- “When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child... Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” (Rev. 12:13,17)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

- 2. **Satan & demons oppose & try to destroy God's work**

- **they tempt people and try to cause them to sin**

- “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.” (Matt. 4:1)

- “Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?’” (Acts 5:3)

The Personality of Satan

- **The activity of Satan and demons**

- 2. Satan & demons oppose & try to destroy God's work**

- **they blind people to truth and lead them astray, so hinder them from coming to God**

- “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Cor. 4:4)

- “The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” (Rev. 12:9)

The Personality of Satan

- The activity of Satan and demons

3. Satan & demons are behind false religions

- e.g. they are behind idols and false gods

“They made Him jealous with their foreign gods and angered Him with their detestable idols. *They sacrificed to demons*, which are not God – gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.” (Deut. 32:16-17)

“...but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. They worshiped idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.” (Psalm 106:35-37)

The Personality of Satan

- The activity of Satan and demons

3. Satan & demons are behind false religions

“Do I mean that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons.” (1 Cor. 10:19-21)

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. (2 Cor. 11:13-15)

The Personality of Satan

- **The power of Satan and demons is limited**
 - **can only act within limits permitted by God**
 - **e.g. Satan & Job**

“Does Job fear God for nothing?’ Satan replied. ‘Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.’

The LORD said to Satan, ‘Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.’ Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.” (Job 1:9-12)

The Personality of Satan

- **The power of Satan and demons is limited**
 - **Satan's defeat was promised in the Garden of Eden**
 - **the Seed of the woman (i.e. Jesus) would crush the Serpent's head**
- “So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [“seed”] and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’” (Gen. 3:14-15)**

The Personality of Satan

- **The power of Satan and demons is limited**
 - **Satan and his angels were decisively defeated at the Cross**
 - “**And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross.**” (Col. 2:15)

The Personality of Satan

- **The power of Satan and demons is limited**
 - **Satan will be cast into the Abyss (the ‘Bottomless Pit’) during the Millennium**

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.” (Rev. 20:1-3)

The Personality of Satan

- **The power of Satan and demons is limited**
 - **Satan and his angels will be completely defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire at the final judgment**

“When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city He loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”
(Rev. 20:7-10)

“Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25:41b)

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **believers are to resist Satan and struggle against him**

- “**Submit yourselves, then, to God. *Resist the devil*, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)**

- “**Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. *Resist him*, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings.” (1 Pet. 5:8-9)**

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **believers are to resist Satan and struggle against him**

**“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
(Eph. 6:10-12)**

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **but not all sin/temptation comes from Satan or demons**

- **also from the world (i.e. the world system)**

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.” (1 John 2:15-16)

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **but not all sin/temptation comes from Satan or demons**

- **also from the flesh (i.e. the ‘sinful nature’ – from within)**

**“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”
(Gal. 5:16-17)**

“When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, *by his own evil desire*, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15)

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **not all sin/temptation comes from Satan or demons**

- **but Satan & demons can and do tempt people**

- **but often, this is by introducing or intensifying temptations presented by the world or the flesh**

- **e.g. temptation of Christ in the wilderness**

- **stones → bread**

- **throwing self from temple**

- **gaining kingdoms of world by worshiping Satan**

- **Satan also known as the “prince of this world”**

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **not all sin/temptation comes from Satan or demons**

- **sin in our lives grieves the Holy Spirit and gives Satan a foothold to attack us**

“In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work... Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” (Eph. 4:26-31)

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **Scripture’s overwhelming emphasis in spiritual warfare is not on ‘binding Satan’ or casting out demons, but on Godly living**

- **Satan & his angels are more powerful than we are**

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Pet. 5:8)

“I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” (Mark 9:18b)

“... these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 8-9)

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **Scripture's overwhelming emphasis in spiritual warfare is not on 'binding Satan' or casting out demons, but on Godly living**

- **but He who is in us is more powerful than Satan**

- **“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)**

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **Scripture's overwhelming emphasis in spiritual warfare is not on 'binding Satan' or casting out demons, but on Godly living**

- **we resist and overcome Satan by yielding ourselves to God and living righteous lives in the power of the Holy Spirit**

- “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” (James 4:7)

- “*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings.*” (1 Pet. 5:8-9)

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

- **Scripture's overwhelming emphasis in spiritual warfare is not on 'binding Satan' or casting out demons, but on Godly living**

- **the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18) – Scripture's prescription for standing against Satan in the strength of God's power:**

- **truth**
 - **righteousness**
 - **readiness coming from the Gospel of peace**
 - **faith**
 - **salvation**
 - **the Word of God**
 - **prayer**

The Personality of Satan

- **Spiritual warfare**

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled against your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” (Eph. 6:10-18)

Next class

**Baptism &
The Lord's Supper**

March 26, 2006

References

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