

FREEDOM AND VICTORY!

By Titus Chu

Today's society has a way of portraying everything in caricature, even Satan. Any grade school child knows what the Satanic caricature looks like. It's a fellow with horns, a pitchfork, and a tail. His kingdom is a cave where all the bad people are, people that look weird and evil. Few realize that neither the devil, nor his kingdom, nor the people in his kingdom conform to those stereotypes.

Actually, the kingdom of darkness is a realm in which a very decent person can live his entire life. He does not have to be particularly evil himself, nor must he purpose to live in darkness. He may just be there by default. Not knowing what he is in, nor why things happen to him the way they do, he continues to live there, assuming it is just the way life is.

There are definite characteristics that accompany life in the dark kingdom. For one thing, it is unclear and opaque. Within it, anyone can search for the wisdom and knowledge to understand the meaning of his life, but he is never able to find it. He will probably even be told that there is no meaning to his life. Once someone is convinced that his existence is random in this universe, that he is a zero, headed nowhere special, and destined for nothing, the results are predictable: he will live a life spent for the moment, an existence that is shallow and trivial. Human beings cannot tolerate an existence like that for long. Eventually, being deprived of any greater purpose than what they have in their bank account, they grow dissatisfied and bitter. The dark kingdom provokes the cry, "Is this all there is?" The dark kingdom at the same time cannot answer this question.

Another characteristic of life in Satan's kingdom is self-exaltation. Human beings, like Satan, endlessly attempt to exalt themselves to higher and higher levels. Just as Satan once said, "I will...", people do the same thing. Their will drives them to ignore God and pursue things that will advance themselves. But the higher one tries to rise, the more one notices he is bound to the baser things in his nature. Someone may become the head of a billion-dollar corporation, et that person may still find himself powerless to deal with certain lusts. Satan's kingdom inflates the proud self in everyone, while in reality its inhabitants find themselves losing the battle with their own personal corruption.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

There is a king over the kingdom of darkness - Satan. The Bible calls him "the tempter" (Matthew 4:3) and "the accuser" (Revelation 12:10). When put together, these two titles tell us something about the kind of trouble that can be expected from him. Satan's way doesn't involve being spooked or being jabbed with a pitchfork. Satan envelops a person in his kingdom with accusation and condemnation.

The victim may feel that he is free to live as he pleases, but actually, he is in bondage. On one side of that person, there is Satan as the tempter, and on the other side, Satan as the accuser. Every day Satan tempts many into worldliness and sin. When they respond and give in to the devil's enticements, the devil then turns around and accuses and condemns them.

For example, you get up one morning. You are peaceful and restful. You feel so good. It is a wonderful day. You buy a newspaper. Suddenly you discover that there is a big sale. The prices are lower than you've ever seen them. Immediately something is stirred up within you. You're tempted, and your peace and rest are gone.

You begin to argue with yourself. “Should I go, or shouldn’t I go? Should I buy a certain thing or not?” The argument doesn’t last long. The sale is just too good, the temptation is so alluring, and now you are caught. Before long you find yourself shopping in the store. You buy item after item. You spend money that you shouldn’t have spent. Then the accuser comes. “You didn’t need that. Weren’t you saving that money for something more important? Why are you wasting your time? You should be ashamed of yourself!”

Besides being caught by temptation, you are thoroughly overthrown and defeated by guilt. Where is your peace now? Where is your rest and joy? After the devil lured you as “the tempter,” he then judged and condemned you as “the accuser.” You are now anxious, unrestful, and defeated. You are now in the kingdom of darkness. You have been overcome by “the tempter” and “the accuser.”

AMBUSHED!

The circumstances just described will differ from person to person, but the results are all the same. Why are you like that? Why are you so easily defeated and manipulated? It’s because Satan surrounds you. As the tempter, he is working with the sin that indwells you. He uses things in our environment to appeal to the sin in your being. Then, once you respond and get into the sin, he accuses you and condemns you, making you feel guilty and depressed. Such a situation in the kingdom of darkness is a no-win situation: above you, Satan is arranging your environment; within your flesh Satan lives as in; on your right hand, Satan is the tempter; and on your left, Satan is the accuser. You are inwardly and outwardly trapped by him. You have been ambushed!

God desires that you would walk with Him. However, as the ruler of this world (John 16:11; Ephesians 2:2), Satan arranges the economic and social trends to keep that from happening. Since he is in our flesh as sin (Romans 7:11,17,20), we respond eagerly to the worldly setting that he himself has arranged outwardly. As the ruler of the world, he sets the world's fads and priorities, and as the sin nature within you, he walks according to those fads and priorities. Once you begin to go along with Satan's arrangement, Satan the accuser takes over and condemns you for having done. So. This experience becomes an endless cycle in the life of the person in Satan's kingdom. Since his (or her) whole being is involved in it, there is no way to be free. No amount of human legislations, no excuses, no effort can bring freedom. Some can try a different approach - to just give in and let their lusts run wild. Why resist? Some try to make a philosophy out of this, trumpeting moral freedom. But the reality remains the same: many men and women are puppets with their strings controlled by Satan. Their apparent choice to be free of restraint is not a true choice at all. Whether they like it or not, whether they choose so or not, they are walking according to the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3).

THE DEVIL'S EMBARRASSMENT

There is one man in all of human history that never was such a victim of the devil. That man was the Lord Jesus. He was unlike any man that ever lived. In the Bible we are told that He said, "& the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing (John 14:30)." This was a declaration no other man ever made or could make: "...in Me he has nothing!"

Consider this for a moment. Mankind is impotent, powerless to overcome temptation. Yet there is one person who could boldly say, "I don't belong to this world. I'm not of this world. The ruler of the world has nothing in Me."

Not only was this Man unaffected by Satan's kingdom, but He came to destroy it. It is one thing for a person to survive the onslaught of an enemy force without being hurt; it is another for that survivor to then turn upon the enemy force and destroy it. This is exactly what the Lord did. First, He dealt with the ruler of the dark kingdom. The Bible says that the evil one was cast out (John 12:31). There are no stories of Christ and Satan wrestling one another. It just says that the evil one was cast out, thrown away, discarded like rubbish. Then the Lord began to empty out the kingdom of darkness of all the human beings held captive there. Today He can transfer you out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God.

Once you are transferred into the kingdom of God, your walk with God begins. This does not mean the tempter will never show up again. It is a fact that he will. The difference now is that God can say to him on your behalf, "Go away, Satan! You ruled that man in the past, but now you've been thrown away! Go back to the garbage pile!" You will no longer need to defend yourself or vindicate yourself, either. Instead, the Lord says, "Leave, Satan!" There's nothing here for you to accuse! I have died for this person and made him right with God!" How about the world? Don't think that it is finished trying to lure you. The difference now is that when the world attempts to attract you, the Lord can assure you, "I am your satisfaction and enjoyment. I will meet your needs."

The victorious life in Christ is now available for us to receive, 2,000 years after He walked on earth. Such a thing would not be possible if He had not died and resurrected. The bible tells us that when He resurrected from the dead, the Lord became the life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45). The life that the Spirit gives is not life in a general sense, but it is specifically the same life which was in the Lord Jesus Himself when He was on this earth - the life that could say NO to the devil. It is the life that did not live for the world. It is the life that consistently rose above every situation. The life in Him was no less than the eternal life of God. That life is indestructible; and when you believe in Jesus Christ, it becomes yours.

Once eternal life comes, you are freed from the power of Satan. The Bible says, “[Christ] delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13). This occurs when you believe in Jesus Christ and receive His life. You are transferred! The tempter’s power is broken! The ruler of the world is cast out! The accuser’s darts are silenced! You are free indeed!

“If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.”
(John 8:36)

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